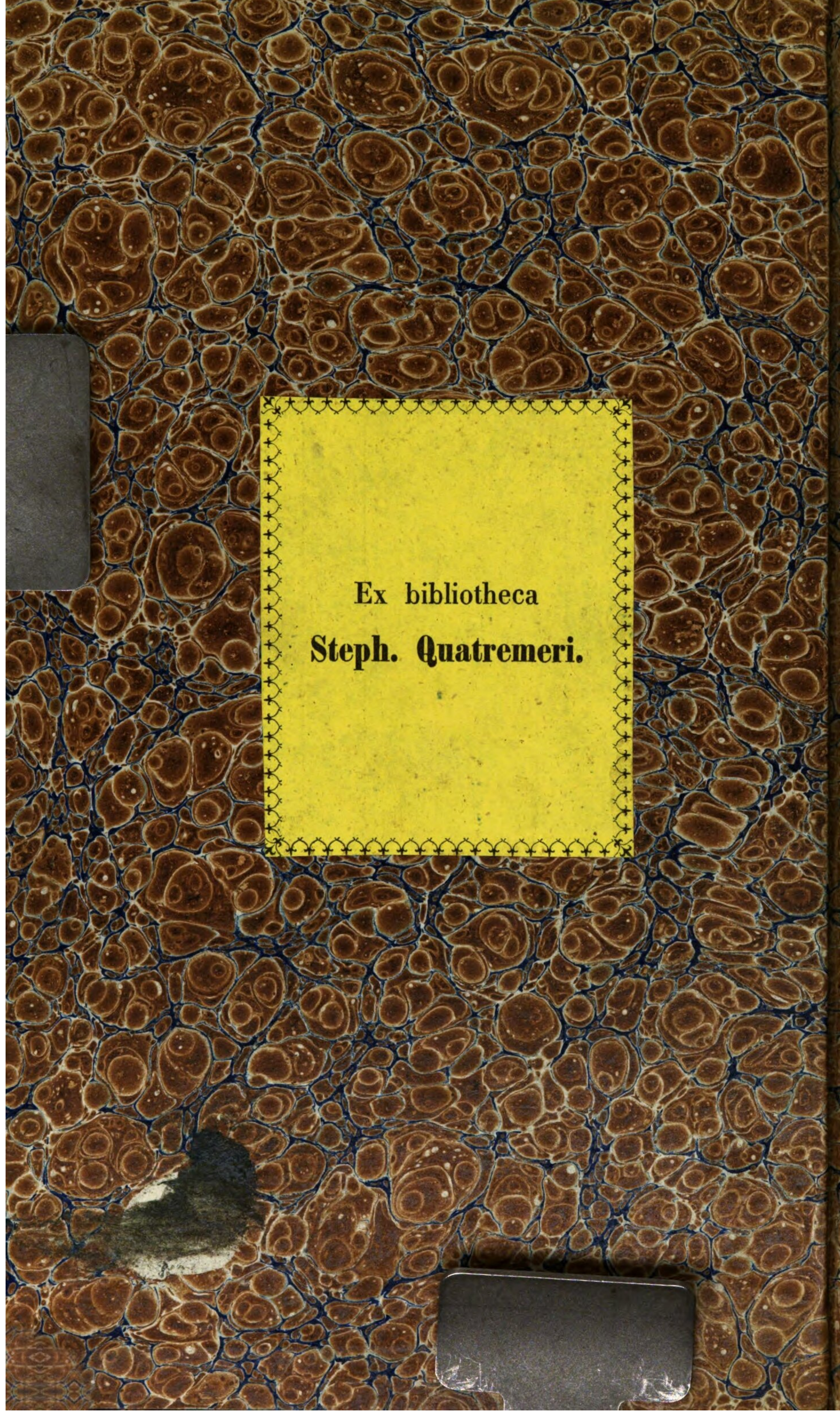
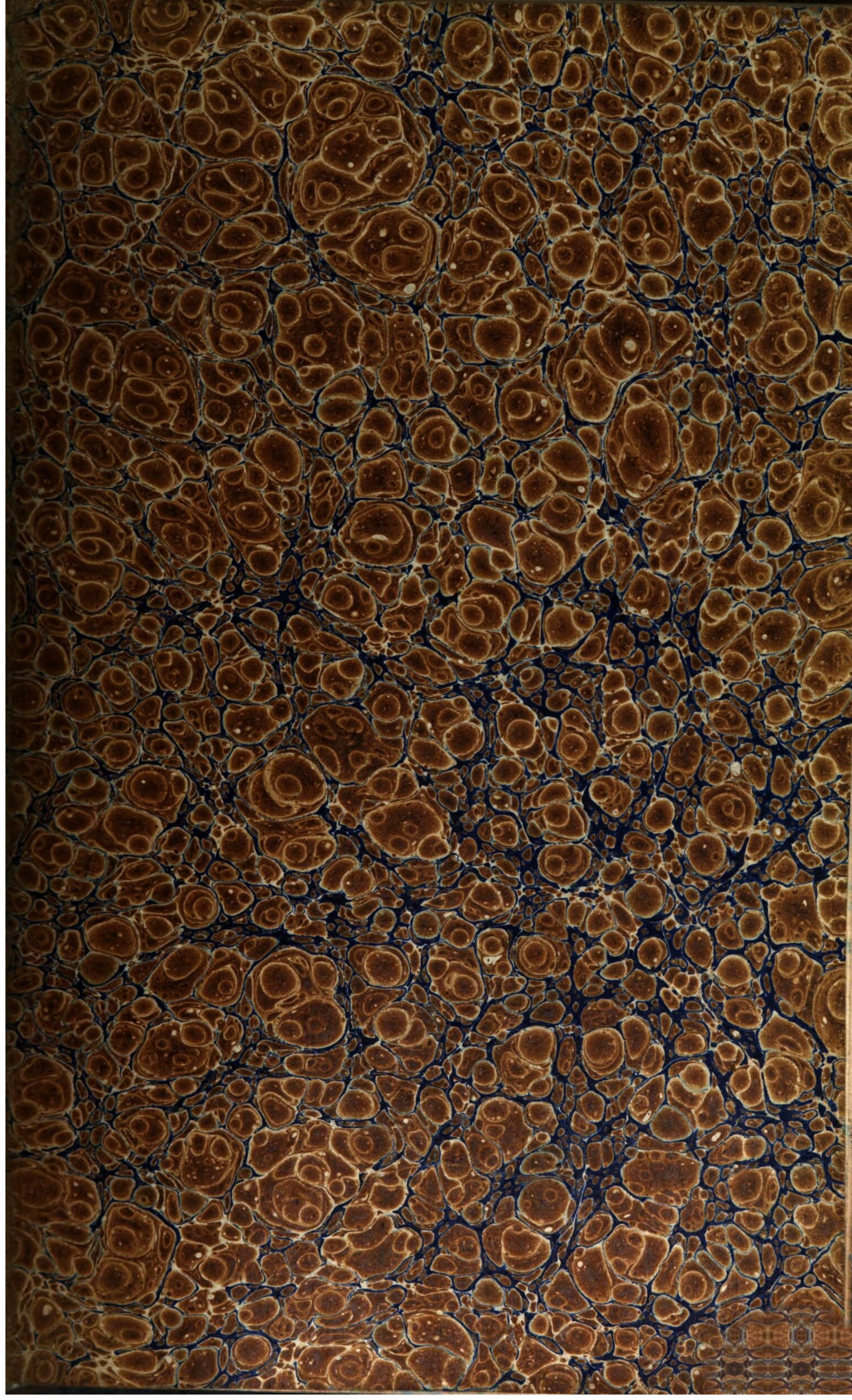




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HOLY SCRIPTURES
BY THE REV. JOHN HENRY, D.D.

REVISED BY ORIGINALLY TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE REGENT,
AND BY HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE DUCKESS OF SOUTHWICK;
OF THE LITERARY COMMITTEE OF ST. JAMES'S PALACE, AND
ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

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AND CO. 4, MARK LANE; SHAW, ST. MARK'S, AND ST. MARK'S,
WELLS, AND ST. MARK'S, 1831.

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MORNING PREACHER AT THE FOUNDLING-HOSPITAL; AND LECTURER
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1816.

COMMENTARIES

AND

ANNOTATIONS

ON THE

OLD TESTAMENT

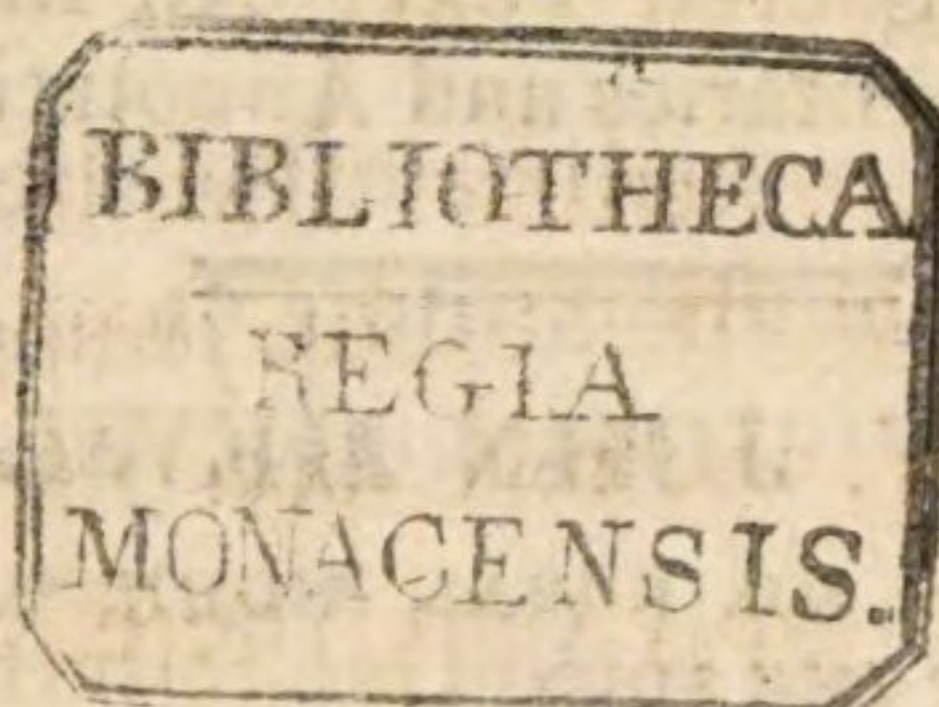
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BY THE
REV. J. G. COOPER, D.D.,
OF THE UNITED STATES, MEMBER OF THE AMERICAN
ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.

LONDON: PRINTED BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, 1816.

AND SOLD BY J. JOHNSON, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, 1816.

J U D G E S.

INTRODUCTION.

SOME writers have assigned this book to Phinehas; some to Hezekiah; and some to Ezekiel. Others suppose that Ezra collected it from such memoirs as every judge furnished of his own government. It seems, however, most probable, that Samuel was the author; who, being a prophet, or seer, and described, in the book of Chronicles, as an historian, may reasonably be supposed to have been the author of this portion of the Hebrew Scriptures.

It appears to have been written after the establishment of the regal government, since the author, in speaking of preceding events, observes, that ‘in those days there was no king in Israel;’ which seems to imply that there were kings when he wrote. There is also some reason to think, that it was written before the accession of David; for it is said, chap. i. 21, that ‘the Jebusites were still in Jerusalem.’ Now, it is known, that they were dispossessed of that city early in the reign of David.

After the death of Joshua, the people appear for a short time to have had no regularly appointed governor, but to have acted in separate tribes. They were for a few years retained in the service of God, by the elders who survived Joshua, but afterwards fell into a state of anarchy, for a period of which we have no other account, than those par-

particulars afford, which are dispersed throughout this book. We find, however, that the people proceeded to the conquest of the remaining part of the country; but that gradually forgetting the instructions of Moses, and of Joshua, they suffered the inhabitants to remain tributary among them; who became, as had been repeatedly predicted, 'scourges in their sides, and thorns in their eyes,' and, as it were, 'snares and traps' to seduce them to idolatry. For this they were punished, and given up to their enemies, and held eight years in servitude to Cushan, king of Mesopotamia, till God raised up Judges to deliver them. Othniel appears to have been the first judge; though some writers say, that Simeon, and others that Caleb, preceded him in the government of the people. During the intervals between the judges, each tribe was governed by its respective elders; and affairs of general importance were referred to the great council, or sanhedrim.

The history of this book may be divided into two parts; the first containing an account of the Judges from Othniel to Samson, and ending at the sixteenth chapter; the second part, describing several remarkable particulars not long after the death of Joshua, are placed towards the end of the book, in the seventeenth and following chapters, that they may not interrupt the course of the narrative. What relates to the last two Judges, Eli and Samuel, is recorded in the following book. The chronology of this period is entangled with many difficulties; but if we include the period of thirty-four years, which may be supposed to have intervened between the death of Joshua and the judicature of Othniel, the book extends its history from A. M. 2578, to the death of Samson, A. M. 2887, and the government of the Judges may be conceived to have continued from A. M. 2612, to the twenty-first year of Samuel's judicature, when Saul was anointed, A. M. 2929; that is, about 317 years.

The Book of Judges furnishes a lively description of a fluctuating and unsettled nation; a striking picture of the

disorders and dangers which prevailed in a republic without magistracy, when ‘the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways;’ when few prophets were appointed to control the people, and ‘every one did that which was right in his own eyes.’ It exhibits the contest of true religion with superstition; it displays the beneficial effects that flow from the former; and represents the miseries and evil consequences of impiety. From the scenes of civil discord and violence which darken this history, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews presents us with some illustrious examples of faith in the characters of Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah.

Amidst the great vicissitude of events in which the justice and mercies of God are conspicuously shewn, we are much struck with the account of the illustrious exploits of the Judges; of Sisera’s defeat and death; of the victory of Gideon; of the punishment of Abimelech; of Jephthah’s inconsiderate vow; of the actions of Samson; of the flagitious conduct of the Benjamites; of the destruction of Gibeah; with the description of many other particulars that enliven the narrative, which is likewise much embellished by the beautiful song of Deborah and Barak, and the significant parable of Jotham. Many of the sacred writers allude to this book, or quote from it; and several relations contained in it point out the origin of many heathen fables.

It should be observed that some of the actions here represented to have been subservient to God’s designs, were justifiable only on the supposition of divine warrant, which supersedes all general rules of conduct. Without this, the deeds of Ehud and of Jael might be pronounced censurable for their treachery and cruelty, however prompted by commendable motives. With respect to some other particulars, it is obvious, that the sacred author by no means vindicates all that he relates. The indiscriminate massacre of the people of Jabesh-Gilead, and the rape of the virgins at Shiloh, must

be condemned on those principles, which the Scriptures have elsewhere furnished, though in the brevity of the sacred history they are here recorded without comment. The characters, likewise, of God's appointed ministers, however spoken of in this book, and in other parts of Scripture, as commendable for their general excellence, or particular merits, are presented to us, in some points of view, as highly blamable. It is easy, however, to discriminate the light from the shade; and, in the description of such mixed characters as that of Samson, while we are led to admire his heroic patriotism, we are taught also to condemn his criminal infatuation and blind confidence in Delilah.—*Dr. Gray.*

CHAPTER I.

VER. 1. *Now after the death of Joshua, &c.*—As we do not read of any particular person, who succeeded Joshua, in his important office of commander of the Israelites, it is probable that every tribe was governed by one or more of their respective elders, for about thirty years; and that in their wars with the Canaanites, they also were their military leaders; for, several of the kings of the country still remaining unsubdued, the Israelites resolved on pursuing their conquests, and probably repaired to the oracle of Shiloh, in order to receive directions from God, which tribe should commence hostilities; or, they might have consulted Phineas the high-priest.—See *Stackhouse.*

2. *Judah shall go up.*—This means, perhaps, that the tribe of Judah should invade the mountainous part of the country, which was in the lot of their inheritance. Understanding the expression in this limited sense, it accords with the prophecy of Jacob; who, having compared Judah to a lion's whelp, adds, 'from the prey, my son, thou art gone up.' Gen. xlix. 9.

6. *And cut off his thumbs and his great toes.*—This was not an unusual act of cruelty in ancient times. It seems to have been dictated, in a variety of instances, by a barbarous policy; because it rendered the victims of it totally incapable of war. Deprived of their thumbs, they could neither draw

a bow, nor launch a spear; and, without the great toes, no man can stand firmly on his feet, or run with his usual speed.

7. *Threescore and ten kings.*]—From the great number of persons called ‘kings,’ we may judge of the petty principalities into which the country was divided. The city, or rather town of Bezek, is supposed, by Dr. Wells and others, to have been near Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Its signification in Hebrew is ‘lightning;’ so called, perhaps, from having been once destroyed by it; and the Hebrew אֲדֹנִי, Adoni, means ‘lord,’ or ‘master;’ so that what the English reader might understand to be a proper name, was probably this man’s title, as governor of the town.

Reland observes that there were two places of this name, not far from each other. According to Eusebius, they were about seventeen miles from Sichem, on the road to Scythopolis, anciently called Bethshan. Compare Josh. xvii. 11; and 1 Sam. xxxi. 10.

7. *As I have done, so God hath requited me.*]—Temporal punishments are frequently conformable to the sin for which they are sent. This was the case with Adoni-bezek. The providence of God is to be seen in the punishments which are inflicted on evil men; for though many sinners prosper, or at least go unpunished, yet God sends such evils upon some offenders, as declare that He rules and governs the world —
Bp. Kidder.

In those rude and barbarous ages, instances of greater cruelty were not uncommon. It is said of Sesostris, that he was accustomed to yoke the kings whom he had conquered to his chariot, choosing them by lot every year; and, by these means, he indicated his triumph over them. (*Plin. lib. xxxiii. cap. 3.*)

Lysimachus, when he had mutilated, in every possible way, the person of Telesphorus, the Rhodian; when he had cut off both his ears and his nose, and the sufferer had lost the appearance of a human being, he fed him for a long time in a cave, and exhibited him as some new and uncommon animal. —
Seneca de Ira. lib. iii. cap. 17.

8. *Fought against Jerusalem.*]—This relates only to the city of Jerusalem; for the strong fortress on mount Sion was not taken, but was possessed by the Jebusites till the time of David.

12. *And Caleb said, He that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, &c.*]—The substance of this and the following verses is inserted in the book of Joshua, chap. xv. 16, &c. which relation seems to have been extracted from this book, and inserted in the book of Joshua by some sacred writer, probably by Ezra, who revised both, for the fuller illustration of all that belonged to the tribe of Judah.—*Dr. Willoughby.*

Or the writer might mention these circumstances by way of recapitulation; and the translation, as Grotius observes, would have been better in the preterpluperfect tense.

14. *When she came to him.*]—‘When she was going home.’—*Dr. Geddes.*

14. *And she lighted from off her ass.*]—See note on Josh. xv. 18.

16. *The children of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law.*]—Moses had invited Hobab, the son of Raguel, or Jethró, Numb. x. 29, to accompany him into the land of Canaan, and it appears from this text that he accepted the invitation. He and his family are thought to have settled near the city of palm-trees, which is supposed to be the same as Jericho.

18. *Also Judah took Gaza with the coast thereof, and Askelon, &c.*]—There is a remarkable variation in the Septuagint: ‘But Judah did not possess Gaza, nor the coast thereof, nor Askelon, nor Ekron, nor Ashdod, nor the coasts thereof.’ This, in all probability, is the true reading; for in chap. iii. 8. of this same book, the five lords of the Philistines are both in the Hebrew and the Septuagint reckoned among the nations which God left unsubdued, to prove Israel by. And, in the following history of Samuel, &c. we do not find that Judah ever had possession of those cities. Josephus says, (lib. v. cap. 2.) Judah did take Askelon and Ashdod; but not Gaza, nor Ekron.—*Dr. Wall.*

19. *Could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron.*]—The conquest of Canaan by an army composed entirely of infantry, over a warlike people, abounding with horses and chariots of iron, evidently appears miraculous; and affords a lasting manifestation of that extraordinary providence which conducted the Israelites. We must not suppose in this instance, because the inhabitants of the valley had chariots of iron, that the purposes of God were defeated, and his promises of driving out the inhabitants before Israel broken. That power which drove back the Red sea, which stopped the Jordan in its course, and, unassisted by human means, overthrew the walls of Jericho, could, with equal ease, have rendered the Israelites victorious over the inhabitants of the valley, notwithstanding their chariots of iron. But the source of all the despondency and defeats of these people, was a distrust of the power of that Being, who had so often and so miraculously enabled them to subdue the most potent enemies. They were encouraged likewise to undertake this conquest by the signal victory achieved by Joshua over the confederated kings and their people, at the waters of Merom, though they were ‘even as the sand upon the sea-shore for multitude, and

had horses and chariots very many. Josh. xi. 4. And a decisive victory is related in Judg. iv, over Jabin, king of Canaan, when the Israelites were headed by a woman, notwithstanding he had nine hundred chariots of iron. See ver. 3, of that chapter.

Junius, Tremellius, and Waterland, instead of 'could not drive out the inhabitants,' render it, 'did not proceed to drive out,' &c. The sentence in Hebrew is elliptical, and the substitution may be *inclination*, as well as *power*, which was in effect adopted by our translators: but if we read, 'they had no inclination to attempt the expulsion of the inhabitants of the valley,' the sense would be better, and more consistent with the subsequent part of the history.

24. *Shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city.*]—From this translation, we may suppose, that the spies meant the public way which led to the city; or the gate of it, which must have been evident enough: but, by a very common ellipsis, we may understand 'the means of entrance into the city,' either by stratagem, or by attacking those parts that were weakest, and afforded the best prospect of success.

27. *Drive out.*]—By the expression, 'drive out,' in this and the following verses, we are to understand something more than expulsion, in the ordinary sense of the word. It must mean the driving out of every individual, without suffering any to remain as tributaries or slaves, and without permitting any to surrender at discretion; for, that the Israelites dispossessed these people of their territories, and established themselves there, is sufficiently evident from the history.

28. *When Israel was strong, they put the Canaanites to tribute, &c.*]—We may attribute this conduct to motives of avarice, rather than to any sentiments of lenity and compassion. They preferred the indolent and selfish policy of extorting from these people a constant tribute, by taxing very severely, we may suppose, the produce of their daily labor, and such possessions as they were permitted to retain, to any further exertions of valor, and to any principles of duty, which might lead them to 'obey the voice of the Lord.' Hence it appears, says Bp. Patrick, that the Israelites permitted a great number of the old inhabitants to remain in the country, and to live among them. In the days of Solomon, we read of a remnant of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, 1 Kings ix. 20, 21, and so late as the time of our Saviour, we find mention of the Gergesenes, Matt. viii. 28. Commentators have supposed, but without sufficient reason, that these people had ALL become proselytes; so far, at least, as to worship and acknowledge the

God of Israel, though they did not entirely adopt the religion of the Jews.

32. *But the Asherites dwelled among the Canaanites, &c.*—These people seem to have entered into a league of friendship with the Canaanites; so that they were intermixed with them, as if they had been the same nation, which was most strictly prohibited by the law of Moses. They did not so much as make them tributaries, but seem to have submitted to the basest conditions of all the other tribes; for it is not said, as of the other tribes, that the people of the land dwelt among the Asherites; but that the Asherites dwelt among them, implying that the Canaanites still remained the lords of the country, and that the Asherites were only permitted to live among them.

CHAP. II. VER. 1. *An angel of the Lord.*—The Jews are generally of opinion, that this angel was some holy man, or prophet, who, by virtue of his office and character, might be styled ‘an angel;’ i. e. a messenger of the Lord. See note on Exodus iii. 13. Bp. Patrick shrewdly observes, that angels are not commonly said ‘to come up,’ but ‘to come down,’ which he considers as one reason why this angel should be taken for a prophet.

Other commentators, who unfortunately think they can never prove, nor believe too much, are decidedly of opinion, that this is the angel of the covenant; and, by a necessary inference, the second person of the holy Trinity.

6. *When Joshua had let the people go.*—That is, after he had divided among them, in full assembly, their respective inheritance by lot, they were permitted to go and take possession of it.

9. *Timnath-heres.*—This should have been written, ‘Timnath-serah.’ See Joshua xxiv. 30. Dr. Kennicott has very satisfactorily shewn, that the mistake was caused by a transposition of the letters הרה, which, in this text, are written סרה. See the Syriac, Arabic, and Vulgate versions.

10. *All that generation were gathered unto their fathers.*—By ‘that generation’ must be understood, not only those who had witnessed the mighty works of God in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; but those also who had seen the waters of Jordan dried up, the walls of Jericho fall down, &c.

10. *And there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord.*—To *know* signifies here to worship and obey in that manner which God had prescribed. The Chaldee renders it, ‘which knew not to fear before the Lord.’—Dr. Willoughby.

11. *Baalim.*—This word is the Hebrew plural for the heathen god, Baal. It appears to have been the common appella-

tive for the gods of Syria, Palestine, &c. We read of a Baal among the Amorites, the Moabites, the Phœnicians, &c. and in those idolatrous ages, it is probable, there were as many Baals as there were nations. Vid. *Selden*, De Diis Syris, passim.

13. *And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.*]—They worshipped the sun and the moon; the former signifying the glorious luminary of the day, and the latter the silver regent of the night. Though some, by Ashtaroth, understand Venus, which, they think, was worshipped in Canaan.

Others are of opinion, that 'Baalim' is a general name for idols of the male kind; and that 'Ashtaroth,' which is a Hebrew plural of the feminine gender, is also a general appellative for female idols. For further information, see a learned disquisition on this word in *Parkhurst's Lexicon*, and in *Selden*, De Diis Syris, Syntagm. ii. cap. 2.

CHAP. III. VER. 3. *Five lords.*]—'The five lordships of,' &c.—*Dr. Geddes*. So, also, the Septuagint.

7. *Baalim and the groves.*]—By the addition of a single letter, ה, Houbigant reads, agreeably to the Syriac and St. Jerome, 'Baalim and Ashtaroth.' See ch. ii. 13.

10. *Mesopotamia.*]—This is in Hebrew אַרַם, 'Aram.' The Greek name was probably retained in our translation, as descriptive of the situation of the country; for it lay between the river Euphrates and the Tigris.

13. *Possessed the city of palm-trees.*]—This was the city of Jericho. Joshua, we read, had destroyed the town; that is, the houses; and had pronounced a curse on him that should attempt to rebuild them. The inspired writer, therefore, must be understood to speak of the suburbs, or the territory which surrounded it. This frequently extended many miles in circumference, in the neighbourhood of ancient towns, and came within the general denomination of 'the city.'

15. *A man left-handed.*]—Rather, as the Septuagint and Vulgate translate, a man who is now said to be ambidexter, or one who can use both hands with equal ease and effect. *Parkhurst*, however, is of opinion, that the Hebrew word אֲמָר, means a person deprived of the use of his righthand; and it appears from ver. 16 and 21, that Ehud certainly used his left hand in preference to his right. See, also, *Houbigant* on ch. xx. 15, 16.

16. *A dagger of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment.*]—The Septuagint reads 'of a span length.' A Jewish cubit is nearly two feet; a span is about eight inches: a fitter length for a dagger to gird upon one's thigh.—*Dr. Wall*.

18. *When he had made an end to offer the present.*]—There is often in the east a great deal of pomp and parade in present-

ing gifts. 'Through ostentation,' says Maillet, (Lett. x. p. 86.) 'they never fail to load upon four or five horses what might easily be carried on one. In like manner, as to jewels, trinkets, and other things of value, they place in fifteen dishes what a single plate would very well hold.' Something of this pomp seems to be referred to in the present passage, where we read of 'making an end of offering the present,' and of a number of people who conveyed it. This remark also illustrates 2 Kings viii. 9. 'So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him, even of every good thing of Damascus, forty camels' burden.'—See *Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 18.

19. *The quarries.*]—The word in the original is פסילים, which our translators seem to have mistaken for quarries. The Septuagint and Vulgate render it 'graven images,' or 'statues of stone,' which some suppose were erected here by the Moabites. The sight of these is thought to have inflamed the zeal and indignation of Ehud, and prompted him, in a clandestine manner, to destroy this idolatrous king.

The religion of mankind was originally, perhaps, nearly the same, in its objects, its principles, and its rites; and, to whatever part of the world the original tribes of men, with their natural fathers at their head, migrated, or settled, they took with them those religious customs, notions, and preferences, which they had received, as part of their patrimony, so to speak, in the land of their primary residence. This is of some consequence to us, because Scripture being often very concise, and the writers of many parts of it frequently taking things to be too well known to need explanation, (as indeed they were to their immediate readers) we are glad to avail ourselves of whatever may contribute to our better understanding of those concisenesses, those non-explanations, which puzzle and perplex the readers of the present day. We naturally turn with a kind of general interest to our own island; and, especially, when we find in it any remains of that original religion, which we have attributed to all mankind, we embrace with pleasure the opportunities they afford us of inquiring, what relation they may bear to those subjects, which from time to time are presented by Scripture.

When we see among ourselves some great stone raised into an upright position as a memorial, we recollect that Jacob raised his stone as a memorial too: when we find many stones forming heaps, we remember that Jacob and Laban formed a heap of many stones: when we find stones of great magnitude composed into a circle, it reminds us that Joshua composed a circle of great stones: and when we connect the idea of a holy place, a place for worship with such a structure of stones, we inquire

whether somewhat similar was not the character of Gilgal, which is so often and so solemnly mentioned in Holy Writ, and whose 'quarries' may perhaps receive explanation from Druidical remains among ourselves. Was Abraham a Druid? He was as fond of the oak as any Druid could be. Was Joshua a Druid? He approaches to that character, when he raised a great stone under the oak, which stood in the tabernacle at Shechem, and observed that it had heard the words of the covenant, &c. Was Samuel a Druid, when he erected his Eben-ezer, his 'stone of help?' At least, he did that which a Druid would have done. Did Moses forbid the use of iron, which would have been a pollution, on the stones of the altar? So did the Druids: they also might say, 'an altar of earth, or of rough stones, stones in their natural state, shalt thou raise.' This subject of this note, it is presumed, may authorise these comparisons; which, it will be remembered, are suggestions only, not sentiments. See Scripture Illustrated.

The following information respecting Druidical monuments is taken from Grose's Antiquities, vol. i. p. 135, &c.

Druidical monuments consist of obelisks, which are larger stones, or pillars, set up perpendicularly, carnes, or carnedes, cromlehs, or cromleches, kist vaens, rocking stones, tolmen, or stones of passage, rock basins, and circles, or ovals.

Of single stones.—These monuments are the most simple, and undoubtedly are of more ancient date than druidism itself; they were placed as memorials recording different events, such as remarkable instances of God's mercies, contracts, singular victories, boundaries, and sometimes sepulchres: various instances of these monuments, erected by the patriarchs, occur in the Old Testament. Such was that raised by Jacob at Luz, afterwards by him named Bethel; such also was the pillar placed by him over the grave of Rachel. They were likewise marks of execration, and magical talismans.

Carnes.—Carnes, or Carnedes, were commonly situated on eminences, so that they might be visible one from the other; they are formed of stones of all dimensions, thrown together in a conical form, a flat stone crowning the apex; the ramp, or ascent, is generally pretty easy, though Toland supposes the Druids ascended them by means of ladders. Carnes are of different sizes, some of them containing at least an hundred cart-loads of stones. According to the writer above cited, fires were kindled on the tops, or flat stones, at certain times of the year, particularly on the eves of the first of May, and the first of November, for the purpose of sacrificing; at which times all the people, having extinguished their domestic hearths, re-kindled them from the sacred fires of the carnes.

Mr. Rowland, in his *Mona Antiqua*, supposes the smaller *carnedes* to be sepulchral monuments, formed with stones thrown on the grave by the friends of the deceased, not only with an intent to mark the place of their interment, but also to protect their corpses from wild beasts and other injuries. He allows the larger monuments of this kind, particularly where accompanied by standing pillars of stone, to have been erected as marks of sacrifices, or some religious ceremony, such as the solemn convention recorded by Moses to have been made between Jacob and Laban.

Kist vaens.—*Kist vaens*, that is, ‘stone chests,’ commonly consist of four flags, or thin stones, two of which are set up edgeways, nearly parallel; a third, shorter than the other two, is placed at right angles to them, thus forming the sides, and closing the end of the chest; the fourth, laid flat on the top, makes the lid, or cover, which, on account of the inequality of its supporters, inclines to the horizon at the closed end. Mr. Toland supposes *kist vaens* to have been altars for sacrifice, most of them having originally belonged to a circle or temple; the inclination of the covering he imagines to have been intended to facilitate the draining of the blood from the victim into the holy vessel placed to receive it. He denies their having been places of burial, saying the bones frequently found near them were the remains of the victims. These monuments are, in the islands of Guernsey and Jersey, still called *autels*, or altars; and *poquelays*; i. e. ‘a heap of stones.’ Mr. Borlace, in his *History of Cornwall*, combats the notion of their being altars for sacrifice; on the contrary, he judges them to be sepulchral monuments, and, in support of his opinion, urges several reasons. Mr. Rowland takes the middle between both, saying, their being sepulchral monuments I deny not, but there may be some appearance of truth in that opinion, yet consistently enough with what I have said of them; for they may be both sepulchres and altars in a different sense, I mean those of later erection; because when the great men of the first ages fell, who were eminent among the people for some extraordinary qualities and virtues, their enamoured posterity continued their veneration of them to their very graves, over which they probably erected some of these altars, or *cromlechs*, on which, when the true religion became depraved and corrupted, they might make oblations and other sacrifices to their departed ghosts.

The cromleh.—The *cromlech*, or *cromleh*, chiefly differs from the *kist vaen*, in not being closed up at the end and sides; that is, in not so much partaking of the chest-like figure; it is also generally of larger dimensions, and sometimes consists

of a greater number of stones; the terms cromlech and kist vaen are however indiscriminately used for the same monument. The term cromlech is derived from the Armoric word *crum*, 'crooked,' or 'bowing,' and *leh*, 'stone,' alluding to the reverence which persons paid to them by bowing. Rowland derives it from the Hebrew words, signifying a devoted, or consecrated stone.

Circles, ovals, &c.—These, it is now generally agreed, were temples, and many writers think also places of solemn assemblies for councils, or elections, and seats of judgment. Mr. Borlace is of this opinion; instead therefore, says he, of detaining the reader with a dispute, whether they were places of worship, or of council, it may with great probability be asserted, that they were used for both purposes, and having for the most part been first dedicated to religion, naturally became afterwards the curia and forum of the same community.

These temples, though generally circular, occasionally differ as well in figure as in magnitude. With relation to the first, the most simple were composed of one circle. Stonehenge consisted of two circles and two ovals, respectively concentric, whilst that at Bottalch, near St. Just, in Cornwall, is formed by four intersecting circles. And the great temple at Abury, or Avebury, in Wiltshire, it is said, described the figure of a seraph, or fiery flying serpent, represented by circles and right lines. Some, beside circles, have avenues of stone pillars; most, if not all of them, have pillars, or altars, within their penetralia, or center.

In the article of magnitude and number of stones, there is the greatest variety; some circles being only twelve feet in diameter, and formed only of twelve stones, whilst others, such as Stonehenge and Avebury, contained, the first one hundred and forty, and the second one hundred and fifty-two, and occupied many acres of ground.

19. *Keep silence.*]—These words are addressed to Ehud, and mean that he should refrain from disclosing his 'secret errand' till the king's attendants had withdrawn. This interpretation is confirmed by the Syriac version; and, indeed, by the words which immediately follow.

20. *A summer-parlour.*]—This does not give the English reader a correct idea of the place. It was probably a platform on the top of the house, which was evidently inclosed for the purpose of shade; but open at top to admit fresh air, and render it cool. The original means 'an apartment for coolness.' In the east, they used ventilators and other artificial means to allay the intenseness of the heat, and accomplished it very

effectually.—See *Dr. Shaw's Travels*, or *Harmer's Observations*, vol. i. p. 260, last edit.

22. *So that he could not draw, &c.*—Dr. Waterland reads, ‘for he drew not the dagger, and it went out behind.’

24. *He covereth his feet.*—This appears to have been a colloquial form of expression among the Hebrews, for going to sleep. It is probably derived from the circumstance, that every one covers his feet when he retires to rest, though other parts of the body may be exposed. So, also, Saul, we read, in the parallel text, 1 Sam. xxiv. 3, ‘Went into a cave to cover his feet.’ This is more than conjecture; for the Arabic and Syriac versions, not to mention Josephus, give the same interpretation of the expression.

31. *And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath.*—It is not known of what tribe this person was, nor how long he judged Israel.

31. *Which slew of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad.*—The goads used in this country were of an extraordinary size. Maundrell tells us, that he measured several, and found them about eight feet long, and, at the larger end, six inches in circumference. ‘They were,’ he adds, ‘armed at the less end with a sharp prick, for driving the oxen, and at the other end with a small spade, or paddle of iron, strong and massy, for cleansing the plough from the clay that encumbers it.’

But the expression probably means such rustic implements as Shamgar and his men could lay their hands on, of which these goads formed a principal part. As the text mentions nothing of any previous servitude, the deliverance here spoken of might be only from some incursion of the Philistines in the season of ploughing, when they thought the Israelites would be dispersed through the fields, and might be more easily surprised; but in which they were repulsed with loss, by the vigilance and bravery of this distinguished judge and his adherents.—See Univ. Hist. vol. ii. p. 231.

CHAP. IV. VER. 2. *Harosheth of the Gentiles.*—So called, because inhabited by the Canaanites; who, having been expelled from their former possessions, had settled in the northern parts of the country. Or else it may have derived its name from other Gentile nations, who frequented those parts, as Strabo observes, for the purposes of merchandise and traffic. Hence it is, that the upper Galilee, which must have been near Harosheth, is also called ‘Galilee of the Gentiles,’ Matt. iv. 15.

4. *And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, she*

judged Israel at that time.]—The words, ‘prophet,’ and ‘prophetess,’ are of very ambiguous signification in the Old Testament. As, therefore, we read of no miraculous action that Deborah did, she was, perhaps, only a woman of eminent holiness, prudence, and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, by which she was singularly qualified to judge the people; that is, to determine causes and controversies among them, according to the laws of God. Her name, in Hebrew, signifies ‘a bee.’ See the texts referred to in the Index under the words ‘prophecy’ and ‘prophets.’

5. *She dwelled under the palm-tree of Deborah.*]—The Septuagint represents her as sitting under the palm-tree, when she administered justice. So, also, Montanus, the Vulgate, and other versions.

6. *Hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded, &c.*]—Houbigant and others read affirmatively, ‘This is the command of the Lord God of Israel.’

10. *At his feet.*]—The meaning is, either that ten thousand men followed his footsteps, or that, agreeably to the law of Moses, his whole force consisted of infantry. רגלי, the word in the original, means a man on foot, or a foot-soldier. Our present translation is unintelligible, unless ‘at his feet,’ may be considered as equivalent to the expression, ‘at his heels.’

The Syriac version and the Chaldee paraphrase omit the expression altogether.

16. *Fell upon the edge of the sword.*]—Rather, ‘Fell by the edge of the sword.’

18. *When he had turned in unto her into the tent, &c.*]—Pococke, giving an account of the manner in which he was treated in an Arab tent, on his journey to Jerusalem, says, ‘my conductor led me two or three miles to his tent, and there he sat with his wife and others round a fire. The Arabs are not so scrupulous as the Turks about their women; and though they have their harem, or women’s part of the tent, yet such as they are acquainted with come into it. I was kept in the harem for greater security; the wife being always with me, no stranger ever daring to come into the women’s apartment unless introduced.’ Vol. ii. p. 5. Nothing can be a better comment on this passage than this story.—*Burder’s Orient. Cust.*

21. *A nail of the tent.*]—This was one of those long sharp pins, or spikes, which were driven into the ground to strain the tent, and keep it in its place.

CHAP. V. VER. 2. *When the people willingly offered themselves.*]—Particularly Zebulun and Naphtali. See verse 18, and chap. iv. 10.

6. *The highways were unoccupied, &c.*]—Rather, ‘the public roads were deserted.’ There are roads in those countries, but it is very easy to turn out of them, and go to a place by winding about over the lands, when that might be thought safer.

Dr. Shaw takes notice of this circumstance in Barbary, where he says, they found no hedges, mounds, or inclosures, to retard, or molest them. To this Deborah doubtless refers, though the Doctor does not apply that circumstance to this passage, when she says, ‘in the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways,’ or *crooked* ways, according to the margin.

The account which Bp. Pococke gives of the manner in which that Arab under whose care he had put himself, conducted him to Jerusalem, illustrates this with great liveliness, which his lordship tells us was by night, and not by the high road, but through the fields; ‘and I observed,’ says he, ‘that he avoided as much as he could going near any village, or encampment, and sometimes stood still, as I thought, to hearken.’ In this manner, precisely, people were obliged to travel in Judea, in the days of Shamgar and Jael.—*Harmer*, vol. ii. 215.

8. *They chose new gods, &c.*]—This verse is differently interpreted. Some suppose, that the Israelites, in consequence of their idolatry, brought on themselves war and destruction; that, in consequence of their baseness and pusillanimity, they were so completely disarmed by their enemies, that not a shield or spear was to be seen. Houbigant, thinking it absurd to say, ‘then was war in the gates,’ when there was neither spear nor shield, by a slight alteration of the text, renders it, ‘after they had chosen new gods, they fled from their gates, or cities;’ and having abandoned those places, where their arms were usually deposited, there was neither shield nor spear among forty thousand in Israel. Matt. Poole, however, is of opinion, that though the Israelites had neither shields nor spears, they might have had swords, bows and arrows, and other weapons to defend themselves, and annoy their enemies.

10. *Speak, ye that ride on white asses.*]—Every one sees that the riding on white asses is a description of nobles and princes. These asses are not, I presume, called ‘white,’ on account of their natural color, but rather from their caparisons, according to the custom which continues among the Arabs to this day, who use saddles of wood in riding, and have always, as a part of their riding furniture, a cloth which they call the *hiran*, about six ells long, which they fold up and put upon the wooden saddle, in order to sit with greater ease; and which they

use when they bait, as a sort of mattress to repose themselves on.—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 376.

Dr. Waterland, following Bochart, translates ‘parti-colored asses.’ Others understand that asses of the zebra kind are meant.

11. *In the places of drawing water.*—Dr. Shaw mentions a beautiful rill in Barbary, which is received into a large bason, called ‘shrub we krub;’ i. e. drink and away, because there is great danger of meeting with robbers and assassins. If such places were proper for the lurking of murderers in times of peace, they must have been well adapted for lying in ambush in times of war; a circumstance which Deborah takes notice of in this part of her song.

But the writer who is placed first in that collection which is intitled ‘*Gesta Dei per Francos*,’ gives a more perfect comment still on this passage. Speaking of the want of water, which the Croisade army so severely felt, at the siege of Jerusalem, he complains, that beside their being forced to use water that stunk, and barley-bread, their people were in continual danger from the Saracens, who lying hid near all the fountains, and places of water, every where destroyed numbers of them, and carried off their cattle.

To which may be added a story from William of Tyre, relating to Godfrey, duke of Lorraine, afterwards king of Jerusalem, who stopping short of Antioch five or six miles, (to which place he was returning,) in order to take some refreshment in a pleasant, grassy place near a fountain, was suddenly set upon by a number of horsemen of the enemy, who rushed out of a reedy, fenny place near them, and attacked the duke and his people.—*Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 409.

12. *Lead thy captivity captive.*—‘Captivity’ is here used for ‘captives;’ the abstract for the concrete, as grammarians express it. Vid. *Glassii Philologia Sacra*, lib. v. c. 4. 1.

She calls upon Barak to go in triumph, carrying his principal captives and spoils along with him, as was the custom in ancient times, to the house of God: for it cannot be supposed that she meant a mere secular show; since the Romans themselves in their triumphs marched to the capitol, and there offered sacrifice to Jupiter. If it be asked, what captives he had to lead, when the whole army of Sisera was cut off, (ch. iv. 16.) the answer is easy; when Barak, after he had routed their army, pursued his victory as far as Harosheth, he brought several persons captive with him, out of that country. But, as Matt. Poole justly observes, ‘none’ is often used, in Scripture, for ‘a few,’ and ‘all’ for a great many. See note on Gen. ii. 19.

14. *Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek.*—The Amalekites were coming to join the army of Sisera, but were opposed in their passage by a small body of Ephraimites, here called a *root*. ‘After thee, Benjamin, among thy people;’ following the example of the tribe of Ephraim, who seem all to have followed Barak. ‘Out of Machir.’ An eminent family in Manasseh, settled on the other side Jordan, which rendered their zeal the more remarkable.—‘Came down governors.’ Some of the principal persons of the country.—‘Out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer.’ Men of letters, who studied and expounded the law; but on this occasion, joined the army under Barak.—*Bp. Patrick*.

It has been observed, that the Hebrew word שֵׁבֶט, which is here translated, ‘a pen,’ has no such signification throughout the Bible. Its general meaning is certainly that of ‘a rod, a staff,’ or ‘a sceptre;’ and in Gen. xlix. 10, it is so rendered. If this interpretation of the word be right, the latter part of the verse will then be ‘out of Zebulun, they who rule with a sceptre;’ i. e. with sovereign power. The Septuagint, the Syriac Version, and the Chaldee Paraphrase, however, favor the present reading.

15. *For the divisions of Reuben.*—This apostrophe to the Reubenites, who were divided among themselves, and whose distracted councils gave the Israelites the greatest anxiety, may be considered as a poetical beauty. Our expression, ‘great thoughts of heart,’ is scarcely English.

17. *Why did Dan remain in ships?*—It appears that this tribe attended to nothing but their merchandise and commerce, while their brethren were hazarding their lives in the field of battle.

17. *Breaches.*—Rather, ‘creeks,’ as it is translated in the margin.

We are told that Ali Bey, marching from Caipha to Joppa by land, set out on the 12th of August, and crossing mount Carmel, came on the 16th near Joppa, and pitched his camp by a brook north-eastward of the town, at a little distance from it; but the ships anchored in a creek, about six miles to the north of Joppa.

So Rauwolf informs us, that when his vessel got clear of the frigates, which came out from all sides near Caipha to seize on it, and got about mount Carmel, two ships pursued them, but were forced to leave them. This shews that there are several places where small ships may put in and anchor; and where the children of Asher might continue in their ships, pursuing their maritime employments, while others of the neighbouring

tribes were hazarding their lives in fighting for their country by land.

19. *The kings came and fought.*]—It appears that several kings of Canaan joined with Jabin in this expedition. Taanach and Megiddo were cities belonging to the half-tribe of Manasseh, and lay not far from the river Kishon.—*Dr. Wells*, vol. i. p. 305.

19. *They took no gain of money.*]—This is scarcely intelligible. The word, *עצב*, which we translate ‘gain,’ means also greediness and eager desire. If this be its true meaning here, the sense of the passage will be, that they entertained no desire for money, or plunder, but were bent on ‘victory and slaughter.’ Houbigant, after the Vulgate, understands by it, ‘that they obtained no money or spoil, which they expected, but only experienced defeat.’

20. *The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.*]—That is, by the bright shining of the stars, they had time to finish the battle.—*Bp. Wilson*.

22. *The prancings of their mighty ones.*]—Instead of their ‘mighty ones,’ *Dr. Waterland* very judiciously reads, their ‘mighty horses;’ that is, their war-horses, which gives great energy to the text, and renders it perfectly intelligible. The flight was so rapid, that the hoofs of their horses were splintered and broken. Anciently, it was not the custom to shoe horses; and we learn from *Tavernier*, *Montfaucon*, and others, that they have excellent horses at present, in Arabia and Tartary, which are never shod.

23. *Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord.*]—She would not have it supposed, that this curse proceeded from her own anger and resentment; but from the authority of God himself, who, by his angel, thus devoted the inhabitants of Meroz to destruction.

25. *She gave him milk; she brought forth butter.*]—Here are several things observable; but it is the account of their manner of making butter I would particularly remark, which is also used, according to *Dr. Shaw*, in Barbary, because it seems to me to throw light on what is said of Jael in this text.

Vitranga, in his commentary on *Isaiah*, tells us that the word *חמאה*, ‘chemah,’ signifies not only butter, but cream, and that this last is the genuine sense of the word; he commends *Alting* for making this observation, which he thinks that writer has effectually confirmed, by comparing *Judges* v. 25, with *Judges* iv. 19. He adds that *Jarchi*, who was an eminent French rabbi of the twelfth century, had the same thought before *Alting*.

I believe few people would think cream very proper drink for one that was extremely thirsty. And if I am not mistaken, a much clearer account may be given of these two texts from Mons. d'Arvieux. Jael, it is to be observed, was the wife of Heber the Kenite; and that Heber, as well as the rest of the Kenites, dwelt in Palestine in tents, just as the Arabs do now, being indeed an Arab tribe. If the Kenites made butter then, as the modern Arabs do, (and as there does not appear any refinement in the present Arab custom, but all the marks of the ancient simplicity, we may believe they did,) the supposing that Jael had been just churning will account, in the easiest manner in the world, for these two Scriptures. Sisera being thirsty asked for some water to drink; she opens a bottle (a skin according to the original, that is, a leathern-bottle,) with which, agreeably to the Arab mode, she had just been churning, and pouring its contents into a bowl fit to be presented to a man of Sisera's quality, and doubtless the best she had in the tent, she offers him this butter-milk to drink. This gave occasion to Deborah to speak of milk and butter both. Sour milk is esteemed by those people more refreshing than that which is sweet. Instead then of giving him water, when he complained of thirst, she gave him a better sort of liquid, but of a kind more refreshing, we may believe, than any other that she had then by her. Every thing in these two texts agrees with the Arab customs. 'Chemah,' חֶמָּה, certainly signifies *butter*, as appears from Prov. xxx. 33; that it signifies *cream* may be true, but is by no means proved by the collation of these passages, as Alting pretends.—Harmer, vol. i. p. 444—446. See note on Gen. xviii. 8.

25. *In a lordly dish.*]—Though the bowls and dishes of the vulgar Arabs are of wood, those of their emirs are, not unfrequently, of copper, tinned very neatly. La Roque takes notice of this circumstance in more places than one. I have met with a like account in other travellers. May we not believe that the vessel which Jael made use of, to present butter-milk to Sisera, and which Deborah in her hymn calls a *lordly dish*, or a dish of *nobles*, was of this sort? Her husband certainly was an Arab emir; the working of metals was much more ancient than her time, Gen. iv. 22; and the mere size of the vessel could hardly be the thing intended. La Roque, indeed, tells us, that the fruits that were brought in at the collation, which the grand emir of the Arabs, whom he visited, treated him with, were placed in a large painted bason of wood. Its being painted was, without doubt, a mark of honor set on this vessel of the grand emir, which distinguished it from the wooden bowls of

the commonalty; but a painted wooden vessel would not have been so proper for butter-milk, as one of copper tinned, which therefore most probably was the sort Jael used.—*Id.*

26. *She smote off his head.*]—The expression in the Septuagint is, διηλωσε κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ, ‘she drove the nail through his head,’ without giving the least indication of her cutting it off. And instead of ‘she smote off his head,’ Dr. Waterland renders, ‘she smote through his head; she pierced and struck through his temples.’ So, also, the Syriac version.

28. *The mother of Sisera looked out at a window.*]—The method of building, both in Barbary and the Levant, seems to have continued the same, from the earliest ages. All the windows open into private internal courts, if we except sometimes a latticed window, or balcony, towards the street. It is only during the celebration of some zeenah, or public festival, that these houses, and their latticed windows, are left open; for, this being a time of great liberty, revelling, and extravagance, each family is ambitious of adorning both the inside and outside of their houses, with the richest part of their furniture; while crowds of both sexes, dressed out in their best apparel, and laying aside all modesty, ceremony, and restraint, go in and out where they please. The account we have, 2 Kings ix. 30, of Jezebel’s painting her face, and tiring her head, and looking out at a window, on Jehu’s public entry into Jezreel, gives us a lively idea of an eastern lady at one of these solemnities.—*Dr. Shaw.*

28. *Window.*]—There are not less than *seven* different words, which the translators have rendered by the term ‘window,’ in our common English Bible.

1. הלל, *hallon*, Gen. viii. 6; xxvi. 8; Jos. ii. 15, from הלל, *halal*, to shine briskly, to irradiate, probably because some very translucent medium was used to introduce and diffuse the light through their apartments. For this purpose polished oyster-shells are still used in the east.

2. ארבה, *arubbah*, Hos. xiii. 3; 2 Kings vii. 19; Isa. lx. 8, from ארב, ‘Arab,’ to lie in wait, as Mr. Harmer has properly observed, probably means such openings as those in ancient castles, through which they shot their arrows.

3. צהר, *tsokar*, Gen. vi. 16, and elsewhere. The word properly means something pellucid, or transparent, to admit the light of the *meridian sun*, placed in the roof, or top of the house. The word frequently occurs in the Bible, and is often translated *noon*, and *noon-day*.

4. אשנב, *ashnab*, Judg. v. 28; Prov. vii. 6. This word appears to mean properly a lattice, to ventilate and cool the inner apartments.

5. **חַמְשָׁה**, *shemeshot*, Isaiah liv. 12, from **שֶׁמֶשׁ**, the sun, because such windows were the medium, through which the solar light was transmitted in their houses.

6. **שֶׁקֶף**, *shekuph*, 1 Kings vi. 4; vii. 4, 5. This probably means no more than an aperture in the wall, with a shutter occasionally to close it; and different from the **הָלוֹן**, *hallon*, or roof-window, which always stood open to admit the light.

7. **כָּוִין**, *kaveen*, Dan. vi. 10, probably from **כָּוָה**, *kava*, to burn, or scorch, because placed in that part of the house on which the *post-meridian* or afternoon sun shone.

Perhaps most of these terms mean no more than *openings* in the walls; but what the *transparent* substances were, placed in these openings, we know not.—*Dr. A. Clarke*. See *Harmer*, vol. i. p. 282; and *Taylor's Heb. Concord*.

30. *A prey of divers colors of needle-work on both sides.*—Rough as the eastern warriors are, in their manners, they frequently wear very gorgeous vestments.

Lady Montague, describing in her letters the pompous manner in which she saw the grand seignor go to mosque, among other attendants, tells us, that she saw ‘the agi of the Janizaries,’ which term, it is well known, signifies the general of the most honorable body of Turkish troops, ‘in a robe of purple velvet, lined with silver tissue, and his horse led by two slaves richly dressed.’ In another place, this very agreeable writer, observing that ancient customs still very much continue in the east, tells us, that ladies pass their time at their looms, embroidering veils and robes, surrounded by their maids.

These outer garments, which her ladyship calls *robes*, and *Dr. Shaw burnouses*, (which he tells us answer to our cloaks) he expressly says, sit very close about the neck. All which circumstances put together, furnish a very pleasant comment on this verse of Judges as it is in our translation.

The first sentences exhibit a striking picture of maternal solicitude, both in words and actions; and of a mind suspended and agitated between hope and fear:

‘Through the window she looked and cried out,
The mother of Sisera, through the lattice:
Wherefore is his chariot so long in coming?
Wherefore linger the wheels of his chariot?’

Immediately, impatient of delay, she anticipates the consolations of her friends, and her mind being somewhat elevated, she boasts with all the levity of a fond female,

Vast in her hopes, and giddy with success;

‘ Her wise ladies answer her ;
Yea, she returns answer to herself :
Have they not found? Have they not divided the spoil?’

Let us now observe, how well adapted every sentiment, every word is to the character of the speaker. She takes no account of the slaughter of the enemy, of the valor and conduct of the conqueror, of the multitude of the captives ; but

Burns with a female thirst of prey and spoils.

Nothing is omitted, which is calculated to attract and engage the passions of a vain and trifling woman ; slaves, gold, and rich apparel. Nor is she satisfied with the bare enumeration of them ; she repeats, she amplifies, she heightens every circumstance ; she seems to have the very plunder in her immediate possession ; she pauses and contemplates every particular :

‘ Have they not found?’ &c.

To add to the beauty of this passage, there is also an uncommon neatness in the versification ; great force, accuracy, and perspicuity in the diction ; the utmost elegance in the repetitions, which, notwithstanding their apparent redundancy, are conducted with the most perfect brevity. In the end, the fatal disappointment of female hope and credulity, tacitly insinuated by the sudden and unexpected apostrophe,

‘ So let all thine enemies perish, O Jehovah!’

is expressed more forcibly by this very silence of the person, who was just speaking, than it could possibly have been by all the powers of language.—*Bp. Lowth, Prælect. 13.*

A specimen of the perfectly sublime ode will be found in this triumphal song of Deborah. It consists of three parts ; first, the exordium ; next, a recital of the circumstances which preceded, and of those which accompanied the victory ; lastly, a fuller description of the concluding event, the death of Sisera, and the disappointed hopes of his mother, which is embellished with all the choicest flowers of poetry. The subject of this ode is the triumph of the Israelites over their enemies, through the divine assistance, and the establishment of their liberty. At the very opening of the poem, this is proposed as the groundwork of it ; and after inviting the kings and princes of the neighbouring nations to attend to this miracle of the divine goodness, the author proceeds to celebrate the praise of God ; not commencing with the benefit so recently received, but with the prodigies formerly exhibited to Egypt :

‘ O Lord, when thou wentest forth,’ &c.

The sudden introduction of such important incidents breathes the free and fervid spirit of the lyric muse. There is, however, no defect in the connexion; nor does any degree of obscurity attend the comparison, which is implied between that stupendous deliverance, and the benefit so lately received.—*Id.* Prælect. 28.

CHAP. VI. VER. 2. *Made them the dens.*]—Dr. Shaw says, that a great way on each side Joppa, on the sea-coast, there is a range of mountains and precipices; and that in these high situations are generally found the dens, the holes, or caves, which are so frequently mentioned in Scripture; and which were formerly the lonesome retreats of the distressed Israelites.

11. *Gideon threshed wheat.*]—Rather, ‘Gideon was then threshing wheat.’ This form of the preterimperfect tense should have been frequently adopted in our translation of the Holy Scriptures.

12. *And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him.*]—Maimonides thinks that the following circumstances were represented to Gideon in a dream, or vision. Menochius is of opinion that the angel here mentioned was Michael: but angels were neither named nor classed, till many ages after the event, which is here recorded. Some, with Bp. Patrick, think it was Jehovah himself; while others are clearly of opinion that it was the Angel of the Covenant, i. e. the ever-sacred Messiah. See *Poole’s Synopsis*; and notes on *Exod. iii. 2*; *John v. 4*.

16. *As one man.*]—Rather, as we should now say, ‘to a man.’

19. *The flesh he put in a basket.*]—There is a passage in Dr. Shaw, which affords a satisfactory comment on this text. It is in his preface: ‘Beside a bowl of milk, and a basket of figs, raisins, or dates, which upon our arrival were presented to us, to stay our appetites, the master of the tent where we lodged fetched us from his flock (according to the number of our company) a kid, or a goat, a lamb, or a sheep, half of which was immediately seethed by his wife, and served with cuscasoe; the rest was made kab-ab, i. e. cut into pieces and roasted; which we reserved for our breakfast, or dinner, next day.’

May we not imagine that Gideon, presenting some slight refreshment to the supposed prophet, according to the present Arab mode, desired him to stay till he could provide something more substantial for him; that he immediately killed a kid, seethed part of it, made kab-ab of another part of it, and when it was ready, brought the stewed meat in a pot, with unleavened cakes of bread, which he had baked; and kab-ab in a basket for his carrying away with him, and serving him for some after-repast on his journey?—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 91.

20. *Broth.*—Instead of ‘broth,’ the Syriac version makes it wine for a libation.

22. *Alas, O Lord God! for, &c.*—It was a general persuasion, we find, that it was dangerous for men, who are sinners, to appear in the presence of superior beings. The idea probably was, that nothing could be concealed from them; that they would know and punish their transgressions, and that the consequence would be death. See note on Luke v. 6—10.

24. *Then Gideon builded an altar there unto the Lord.*—Gideon having erected this altar, in commemoration of his extraordinary vision, continued it afterwards as a place of sacrifice and public worship, contrary to God’s appointment. He resolved to have priests of his own, ch. viii. 27, and made an ephod, that is, a breast-plate, in imitation of that appointed by God, by which the divine will was made known to men. All this became a snare and a sin, and was attended with ruin to himself and his family: 1. By introducing a worship of his own; 2. In making an ephod, and ordering it to be worn by another person beside the high-priest; 3. By multiplying altars; and 4. By causing schism, and leading men into superstition and idolatry. See note on ch. viii. 27.

25. *The second bullock.*—Some commentators have felt considerable difficulty in interpreting this text. But nothing more seems necessary to the right understanding of it, than to suppose that Gideon’s father had two bullocks; and that the older was called the first, and the younger the second. It was the young one, or the second, which was to be offered as a burnt-sacrifice.

31. *And Joash said.*—Instead of this, the Septuagint version is, ‘And Gideon, the son of Joash, said,’ &c. which seems preferable.

32. *He called him Jerubbaal.*—Rather, as Houbigant renders it, ‘they called him, or he was called, Jerubbaal.’ The meaning of this compound is, ‘let Baal avenge himself;’ or ‘an opposer of Baal.’

CHAP. VII. VER. 5. *Every one that lappeth of the water, &c.*—It appears that it was not unusual for the Arabs to drink water out of the palms of their hands; and, from this verse, we learn that the Jews did so occasionally. Dr. Adam Clarke, in the last edition of Harmer, has given us the following curious manuscript note from Dr. Russell. ‘When they take water with the palms of their hands, they naturally place themselves on their hams to be nearer the water; but when they drink from a pitcher, or gourd, fresh filled, they do not sit down on purpose to drink, but drink standing; and very often they put the sleeve

of their shirt over the mouth of the vessel, by way of strainer, lest small leeches might have been taken up with the water. For the same reason, they often prefer taking the water with the palm of the hand, to lapping it from the surface.' Vol. ii. p. 52.

From the letters of Busbequius, the imperial ambassador at Constantinople, we learn, that the eastern people are not in the habit of drinking standing. But the three hundred men, who, on coming to the water, satisfied their thirst in the most expeditious manner, sufficiently indicated by this their spirit, and their alacrity to follow Gideon in his dangerous enterprise; while the rest, who, by kneeling down to drink, shewed a degree of self-indulgence and a love of ease, were dismissed for their probable effeminacy and want of courage. Compare Ps. cx. 7, and see the note there.

22. *And the three hundred men blew the trumpets, &c.*—Niebuhr relates a stratagem somewhat similar to Gideon's, in his account of two Arab chiefs, who were contending for the imamship of Omam. The name of the one was Achmed, and the name of the other Bel Arrab. The former, besieged by superior numbers in a small fortress, where he had taken refuge, and not being able to defend himself, secretly withdrew to a town, a good day's journey from the besieged fortress, where he was much beloved. He found no difficulty in gathering together some hundreds of the inhabitants, with whom he marched against his enemy. Bel Arrab had placed his camp between some high mountains near the above-mentioned fortress. Achmed ordered a colored string to be tied round the heads of his soldiers, that they might be distinguished from their enemies. He then sent several small detachments to seize the passes of those mountains. He gave each detachment an Arab trumpeter to sound an alarm on all sides, as soon as the principal party should give the signal. Measures having been thus taken, the imam's son gave the signal at day-break, and the trumpets sounded on every side. The whole army of Bel Arrab being thrown into a panic at finding all the passes guarded, and judging the number of the enemy to be proportionate to the noise that was made, was routed. Bel Arrab himself marched with a party to the place where the son of the new imam was keeping guard; who, knowing Bel Arrab, attacked and killed him; and having cut off his head, according to the custom of the Arabs, carried it in triumph to his father.—Niebuhr, Trav. p. 263.

24. *Take before them the waters.*—Take possession of the fords of the rivers, before the Midianites shall reach them, in order to effect their escape.

25. *They took two princes of the Midianites.*—Two of their princes, or generals; for the Hebrew word may mean either. *Oreb*, in the Hebrew, signifies *a crow*, and *zeeb*, a wolf. It was anciently the custom for great men to take the names of their families from the animal world. Thus, among the Romans, we read of the *Gracchi*, *Corvini*, and *Aquilini*; names which were either used as fortunate omens, or as memorials of their courage and dexterity in military achievements. The *rock* and the *wine-press*, no doubt, received their names from those princes, who were slain, the one near a rock, or concealed in a cave, we may suppose, and the other at a wine-press. Their heads were carried to Gideon, as was usual in after-times. Thus, Pompey's head was brought to Cæsar, and Cicero's to Marc Antony.—See *Bp. Patrick*.

25. *And brought the heads, &c.*—The Septuagint has *Ἀπὸ περὰν τῆς Ἰορδάνου*, commonly rendered 'from the other side of the Jordan;' but it may mean, 'from the banks of the Jordan, without denoting either side.' Or, 'from the ford of the Jordan,' where, perhaps, these princes were killed, in the act of crossing the river. The Hebrew *מֵעֵבֶר לַיַּרְדֵּן* will bear the same interpretation. Our translation supposes that they were slain on the east side of the Jordan, which is by no means probable. See ch. viii. 4.

CHAP. VIII. VER. 2. *Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim, &c.*—The meaning is, that the advantages which Ephraim had gained, after the victory, particularly in preventing the escape of the enemy, and in slaying the two princes of the Midianites, were superior to the conquest which Gideon and his little army had achieved. Abi-ezer was the chief of the family from which Gideon was descended.

4. *Faint, yet pursuing them.*—Houbigant renders it 'faint and hungry,' which accounts for the petition in the next verse.

7. *I will tear your flesh with the thorns, &c.*—This threat probably relates to a cruel method of torture, used in those times, for putting captives to death, by laying briers and thorns on their naked bodies, and then drawing over them some heavy implements of husbandry. Drusius thinks that persons put to death in this manner were laid naked on thorns and briers, and then trampled on.

13. *Before the sun was up.*—By considering the Hebrew word *הָהָרִם* as the name of a place, Houbigant translates this passage, 'by that place which is above Hares.' The Septuagint, the Syriac and Arabic versions, confirm this reading.

16. *And thorns of the wilderness and briers.*—These thorns of the wilderness are the *קוץ*, *kutz*, of Gen. iii. 18; but the briers are denoted by a different word, *בִּרְקָנִים*, *barkanim*.

There is a plant mentioned by Hasselquist, the name and properties of which somewhat resemble those which are required in the Barkanim of this passage. 'Nabca paliurus Athenæi,' (Alpin. Egypt. 16, 29.) the Nabka of the Arabs. There is every appearance that this is the tree which furnished the crown of thorns, that was put on the head of our Lord. It is common in the east, and a plant more proper for the purpose could not be selected; for it is armed with thorns; its branches are supple and pliant, and its leaf is of a deep green like that of the ivy. Perhaps the enemies of Christ chose this species of thorn, in order to add insult to punishment, by using a plant which, in appearance, resembled that with which they crowned emperors and generals.

16. *He taught the men of Succoth.*]—Instead of וִידַע, 'and he taught,' Le Clerc and others would read וִרִישׁ, 'and he tore,' agreeably to the threat ver. 7. The ancient versions all agree in giving a similar interpretation; but Lud. de Dieu says, that the Hebrew verb, in our present text, sometimes signifies to punish, or put to death, with torture.

21. *As the man is, so is his strength.*]—'The might of a man is proportionate to his age.'—*Dr. Geddes.*

26. *Beside the chains that were about their camels' necks.*]—Perhaps these chains were like those which Bp. Pococke saw in Egypt, hanging from the bridles of the Agas of the seven military bodies of that country to the breast-plates of the animals on which they rode, in the grand procession of the caravan, when about setting out from Mecca. Only these were of silver, whereas those of the Midianitish kings were of gold. They were however both, apparently, marks of distinction and grandeur; and, probably, were worn in the same manner.—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 456.

27. *And Gideon made an ephod thereof.*]—It is impossible that this immense quantity of gold could be all used in making an ephod. It is probable, therefore, that the inspired writer intimated by this term, that Gideon established a sort of priesthood by his own authority. He formed images, cherubim, perhaps, and other things, by which the people were enticed from the worship of the true God; or else worshipped him in an idolatrous manner. Saadias, the author of the Arabic version, says, that Gideon formed this gold into an image.—See *Spencer De Leg. Heb.* p. 945.

CHAP. IX. VER. 5. *Upon one stone.*]—Some understand that he intended to make them victims to Baal; for a stone was sometimes used as an altar, 1 Sam. vi. 14, 15. And so they take this to have been done, in revenge for the sacrifice of the bullock prepared for Baal on the rock, (vi. 25, 26,) which crime

of Gideon, as these idolaters considered it, they determined to expiate by the sacrifice of all his sons. For, that the men of Shechem joined in this impious slaughter, is manifest from verses 18 and 24 of this chapter.

It was a common mode of capital punishment, in ancient times, to precipitate culprits from an eminence upon a rock, or stone; and perhaps this was adopted on the present occasion. Our blessed Saviour seems to allude to the same, Matt. xxi. 44.

8. *The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king, &c.*—This is the first and most ancient apologue, or fable, we meet with. As speech became more cultivated, says Bp. Warburton, the rude manner of speaking by action was polished into an apologue, or fable, in which the speaker, to accomplish his purpose, recited a familiar story of his own invention, accompanied with such circumstances as rendered his designs both evident and persuasive. The address of Jotham to the men of Shechem, in which he upbraids their folly, and foretels their ruin, in chusing Abimelech for their king, is an admirable specimen of this species of writing. The general moral is, that weak and worthless men are ever forward to thrust themselves into power, while the wise and good, valuing their ease and freedom, are apt to decline it. The vanity of base men is taught in the 15th verse, and the ridicule of that vanity is inimitably exposed in those circumstances, where the bramble is made to bid his new subjects, who wanted no shadow, to come and put their trust in him; and that, in case of disobedience, a fire should issue from himself, which would devour the cedars of Lebanon; whereas the fire of the bramble was considered by the Orientalists as momentary and ineffectual to a proverb. Compare Eccles. vii. 6.

9. *To be promoted.*—Peters, on the book of Job, remarks, that the word here rendered ‘promoted,’ is never used in this sense; but signifies, to be moved to and fro, to wander, to stagger, to be shaken, to be tossed. Such an interpretation certainly gives a more lively image of the perils, the cares, and vicissitudes of government, among such a turbulent, capricious, and refractory people as the Israelites were.

13. *Wine, which cheereth God and man.*—This form of speech, however singular it may appear to us, is perfectly justifiable, as connected with the Jewish sacrifices, and as used in common both by them and by the Gentiles. Wine, as the Jewish doctors assert, was not only used in their oblations; but till the drink-offering was poured out, they did not begin the hymn that was then sung to the gods. Virgil, speaking of noble vines, or wines, says, they were

Mensis et diis accepta secundis.—GEORG. lib. ii. 101.

‘Grateful to the gods and second courses:’ that is, they were so excellent as to be fit to be used for libations that were made at the second course. See Orient. Cust.

The Hebrew word, which is here translated God, is the general term **אלהים**, ‘Elohim,’ which, being in the plural number, may signify kings and princes, or any men of high rank and office. The meaning, therefore, may be, ‘wine, which cheereth rich and poor, the high and the low.’ But the following ingenious remark of Bp. Warburton deserves notice. ‘Jotham, in this verse, does not mean God, the governor of the universe, but he intended to say, that wine cheereth hero-gods and common men; for he is here speaking to an idolatrous city, which we read ran a whoring after Baalim, and made Baal-berith their god; a god sprung from men; as may be partly collected from his name, as well as from other circumstances of the story. This expression contains one of the finest strokes of ridicule in the whole apologue, and insinuates to the Shechemites the vanity and the pitiful origin of their idolatrous gods, who were thought to be, or who really had been, perhaps, refreshed with wine.’

20. *Let fire, &c.*—Some commentators understand this as a prediction; but it is more natural to consider it as an imprecation. Like that of Joshua, it was fully accomplished, not indeed by fire, in the literal sense of the expression; but by a spirit of vindictive rage, of which fire may be considered the significant emblem.

23. *God sent an evil spirit.*—That is, God permitted the evil spirit of treachery and discord to break out between Abimelech and the men of Shechem.

29. *And he said to Abimelech.*—Rather, ‘and I would say to Abimelech;’ so, also, the Septuagint renders it: for, as Dr. Wall observes, this was not said in the presence of Abimelech, as our translation imports; but at an intemperate feast, in his absence, when Gaal boasted that he would challenge him.

45. *And sowed it with salt.*—Salt used in small quantities renders land extremely fertile; but too much of it destroys vegetation. Hence, in Scripture, ‘a land of salt’ is equivalent to a barren land. If salt were really used on this occasion, it must have been as a significant emblem, that the city was never to be rebuilt. Every place, says Pliny, (lib. xxxi. cap. 7.) in which salt is found, is barren, and produces nothing. Or, perhaps, ‘to sow with salt,’ was a proverbial expression to denote violent hostility, and the utter destruction of a place.

53. *And all-to brake his scull.*—This is an antiquated form of expression in our northern counties, meaning ‘full intention’ to complete the end proposed. ‘All-to,’ as Dr. Johnson observes, ‘is a particle of mere enforcement.’ The Septuagint has simply *Και εκλασε το κρανιον αυτης*, ‘and she broke his scull.’

56. *Rendered.*—That is, ‘requited,’ or ‘punished.’

CHAP. X. VER. 12. *The Zidonians also, and the Amalekites, and the Maonites, did oppress you.*—The Septuagint reads, ‘and the Midianites.’ The Vulgate, Symmachus, and one copy of the Septuagint have, ‘and Canaan.’ There is no account of any people called Maonites; nor any history of such a people oppressing the Israelites. The word in the Hebrew seems to have been erroneously written for the Midianites, who had lately oppressed them.—*Dr. Wall.*

CHAP. XI. VER. 1. *And he was the son of an harlot.*—Rather, ‘but’ he was the son of an harlot.

3. *In the land of Tob.*—It is probable, that this is the same as Ish-Tob, mentioned 2 Sam. x. 8. It appears to have been a part of Syria, near Zoba, Rehob, and Maachah. If so, it could not be far from Gilead, the country of Jephthah.—*Dr. Wells*, vol. i. p. 342.

11. *Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord.*—This seems to have been a solemn form of ratifying the covenant between him and the elders of Gilead. ‘Uttering all his words before the Lord,’ was equivalent to taking a solemn oath, or entering into a religious vow. We still use the same form of expression, in swearing before God, or in the presence of God.

12. *Sent messengers unto the king, &c.*—In this respect, he conformed to the rule of conduct prescribed by Moses; which was, not to make war, till he had sent messengers with proposals of peace.

31. *In peace.*—That is, ‘successful.’

31. *Shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it, &c.*—Few subjects of Biblical criticism have afforded greater variety of commentary and conjecture than this of Jephthah's vow. The difficulty is, to determine, precisely, what was the nature of this vow, and how it was performed. ‘With respect to our present translation, it has been observed by Grotius and others, that the Hebrew copulative *ו* (vau) is frequently taken disjunctively, and may be here rendered, ‘or.’ The text will then be, according to Dr. Waterland, ‘whatsoever cometh forth, &c. shall be consecrated to the Lord; or I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.’ But however the words may be rendered, this appears to have been a rash vow. It has been justly observed, that what came out of his doors to meet him, might have been unlawful to

offer unto the Lord, and therefore wholly unfit for a burnt-sacrifice, as the event proved. According to the law of Moses, it would have been clearly 'an abomination,' for Jephthah to have sacrificed his only daughter; nor do we read of any institution, which allowed a father to condemn a female to perpetual celibacy. But it does not follow that Jephthah was a strict observer of the laws of Moses; and if he had, he might have redeemed his vow on paying thirty shekels. See Levit. xxvii. 4.

Many commentators are of opinion, that the father's vow devoted his daughter to death, and that she was really sacrificed. Josephus also asserts, that, after a respite of two months, she was actually sacrificed as a burnt-offering. Vid. Antiq. Jud. lib. v. c. vii. § 10. But who was to perform the horrid rite? Not Jephthah himself; that would have been most unnatural and inhuman. The Jewish priests would certainly have dissuaded him from it; and the magistrates must have known, that such sacrifices were expressly forbidden by the laws of God. For these reasons, we may conclude with certainty, that Jephthah's daughter was not put to death; and an attentive consideration of the context will induce us to believe, that his vow was fulfilled in dooming her to perpetual virginity, and to the holy exercises of a religious life. Considering that she was his only child, this may sufficiently account for his distress, expressed ver. 35. Having required two months to bewail her fate, it is said, that on her return to her father, 'he did with her according to his vow.' It is immediately added, ver. 39, 'and she knew no man,' which seems a sufficient indication, that by devoting herself to a state of virginity, she fully accomplished her father's vow.—See *Houbigant*.

For further information on this subject, the reader may consult the learned dissertation of Lud. Cappellus, or the miscellaneous observations, which are to be found in Poole's Synopsis on the 40th verse of this chapter.

Bp. Warburton is of opinion that Jephthah's daughter was really sacrificed, and gives us the following account of this celebrated judge and champion of Israel.

'Jephthah, a bastard son of Gilead by an harlot, being excluded from a share of his paternal inheritance, by the legitimate issue, took refuge in a strange land. What effects this expulsion must have had on his religious sentiments, we may learn from the case of David, who thus expostulates with Saul on his exile. 'If (says he) they be your counsellors, who have advised you to this unjust usage of me, cursed be they before the Lord: for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Go, serve other gods.'

Now, if David, so learned and zealous in the law, was exposed at least to this inevitable temptation, by his exile in a foreign land, what must we think of Jephthah in similar circumstances, who had nothing of David's knowledge of the law, and consequently none of his zeal for its support? In this foreign land, Jephthah associated himself with a dissolute band of outlaws, who lived upon rapine and violence. Among these men, he soon became their leader, and a distinguished chief in all their lawless expeditions. So that his fame for military achievements filled all the regions round about.'

'At this time, the Israelites, in punishment for one of their defections from their God and king, were laboring under the oppression of the idolatrous borderers. And the Amorites making an excursion into Gilead, the Israelites of this place, as most immediately concerned, sought to provide for themselves, as well as for their brethren, some leader of superior power and distinguished capacity. And the reputation of their kinsman, Jephthah, made them first apply to him. But Jephthah, with the frank roughness of a soldier of fortune, naturally upbraided them, on this occasion, with their former neglect and injustice, in permitting his father's house so cruelly to cast him out, to want and misery; and now, as meanly, without redressing his injuries, to fly to him in their distress.'

'They reply, that they now come to make him that amends, by their choice of him as their leader and head over all the inhabitants of Gilead. Jephthah accepts this satisfaction, and an *act* is made of their proceedings, according to the religious customs of those times.'

'All this while, the republic, the theocracy itself, seems to have been little thought of by this future judge of Israel. Indeed the honor of so sacred a station had small charms for our licentious outlaw.'

'However, in consequence of the reconciliation, and in pursuance of the choice which the Gileadites had made of him for their head and leader, he enters on his office. And now, perhaps, for the first time, he observed towards his enemies all the punctilios of the law of arms.'

'He sent to know of the children of Ammon, why they committed hostilities against his countrymen. They answered, that the Israelites had unjustly dispossessed them of their lands; and that they were now assembled in arms to recover the inheritance of their fathers. To this Jephthah replied, v. 15—22, like an able advocate, as well as a determined chieftain.'

'But, by what follows, it appears that our famous adventurer was, as yet, more than half a Pagan; for thus he proceeds. 'So

now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel; and shouldest thou possess it? Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh, thy god, giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess.' This was said on the gentile principle of local, tutelary deities, in all the grossness of that nation; not yet refined and rationalised by this adventurer, on the ideas of the law. But when he resumes the civil argument, he again reasons better; and very solidly pleads (v. 26.) the general law of prescription, in defence of his people. But the force of this argument making no impression, the negociation ended in an appeal to arms. Jephthah leads out his troops against Ammon. And, in the front, without doubt, were those faithful bands, which he had collected and disciplined in the land of Tob.'

'The first step he takes to invite success, was the making an absurd pagan vow, that, if he returned with victory, he would sacrifice, for a burnt-offering to God, whatsoever came first out of the doors of his house to welcome his return. He came back a conqueror; and his daughter, impatient to celebrate his triumph, being the first who met him, was, for his oath's sake, (though with extreme regret, because, beside her he had neither son nor daughter,) sacrificed for her pains, according to the then established custom of idolatry; which, on such occasions, required a sacrifice of what was most dear to the offerer.'

After all that had been written and conjectured on this much disputed passage, it was reserved for the learned and judicious Dr. Randolph to shew, not by adopting a various reading, or altering the sacred text, but by a fortunate application of a rule of Hebrew grammar, that the original may be so rendered as to make the meaning perfectly clear; and to put the subject out of all controversy in future. The Hebrew is, וְהַעֲלִיתִי הוּא עֹלָה, which in our translation is, 'And I will offer it up for a burnt-offering:' but, by making the pronoun הוּא relate to יְהוָה, which is the word immediately preceding, we may render it, 'And I will offer Him,' (or to him, i. e. Jehovah) 'a burnt-offering.' The ellipsis of the preposition לְ 'to,' on this occasion, is as common in Hebrew as it is in English. (*Buxtorf*, Thes. Gram. lib. ii. c. xx. p. 574.) See *Dr. Randolph's* excellent Sermon on Jephthah's Vow, in the second volume of his Tracts, &c. p. 170; and *Bp. Lowth* on Isaiah xlii. 16.

33. *Unto the plain of the vineyards.*—Dr. Geddes considers the Hebrew as the name of a place, and renders it, 'as far as Abelcheramim.'

39. *According to his vow which he had vowed.*—That is, he

dedicated her a virgin to the service of God, and so deprived himself of all hopes of posterity.—*Bp. Wilson.*

39. *And she knew no man.*—These words plainly shew what the accomplishment of the vow was, and explain the meaning of the whole history.

40. *To lament the daughter of Jephthah.*—This expression may serve to mislead the English reader, and to convince him that she was really sacrificed. The word, in the original, תָּנִית, is Chaldee, and signifies to discourse, and with a *lamed* prefixed, means to discourse *with, for, about, &c.* and Montanus renders it by ‘ad alloquendum,’ which agrees with our marginal reading.

Lud. de Dieu understands that these virgins came four times a year to applaud her for her fortitude and piety; and for this interpretation of the word he refers to Judges v. 11. Vatablus, Drusius, and others, would read, ‘to comfort the daughter of Jephthah.’ Grotius thinks that they not only applauded and consoled her, but celebrated her praises in songs composed for the occasion: and Epiphanius relates that this continued to be done so late as his time by the Samaritans, and in the same place. The story of Agamemnon and Iphigenia is supposed to be derived from this of Jephthah and his daughter.

CHAP. XII. VER. 3. *I put my life in my hands.*—An hebraism signifying that he exposed himself to imminent danger. There is a similar expression quoted by Athenæus, *Εν τῇ χειρὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἐχούσα*. Those who carried ‘in their hands’ any thing dear and precious, in a country abounding with all sorts of plunderers and robbers, were in the utmost danger of losing it. Hence the significance and propriety of the expression. See the parallel text.

6. *Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said ‘Sibboleth.’*—In Arabia we are told the difference of pronunciation by persons of various districts is much greater than in most other places, and such as easily accounts for the circumstance mentioned in this passage. Niebuhr (*Trav.* p. 72.) relates something similar to it. ‘The king of the Hamjares, at Dhafar, said to an Arab, a stranger, *Theb*, meaning to say, ‘sit down;’ but as the same word, in the dialect of the stranger, signified ‘leap,’ he leaped from a high place, and hurt himself. When this mistake was explained to the king, he said, ‘let the Arab who comes to Dhafar first learn the Hamjare dialect.’ He farther says, ‘they not only speak quite differently in the mountains of the small district, which is governed by the Imam of Yemen, from what they do in the flat country; but persons of superior rank have a different pronunciation, and different names for things, from those of the peasants. The pronuncia-

tion of certain letters also differs. Those which the Arabs of the north and west pronounce as K or Q, at Masket, are pronounced tsch; so that 'bukra kiab' is by some called 'butscher tschiab.'

Persons belonging to separate districts of the same country, pronounce very differently at present. In ancient times, it must have been more so. An Athenian spoke Greek very differently from a Dorian, and a Yorkshireman now speaks such English, as is scarcely intelligible to a native of our western counties. St. Peter, we read, was known to be a Galilean from the few words which he uttered in the court of Pilate's palace; and the Ephraimites were sufficiently distinguished by their mode of pronouncing the single word 'Shibboleth.'

With respect to the number said to be slaughtered at the passes of the Jordan, it appears immense; particularly when we consider, that they must have been slain singly, and every individual must have had an opportunity given him of trying whether he could pronounce the word 'Shibboleth,' or not. At the numbering of the Israelites, (Num. i. 33.) we find that the whole tribe of Ephraim amounted only to 40,500, and here 42,000 are said to have been slain. But the Hebrew is ארבעים ושנים אלף, 'forty, and two thousand,' where the *and* means simply addition; or by an inversion, that is sometimes allowable in interpreting Hebrew numerals, we may read, 'two thousand and forty;' which would, perhaps, be the true translation, and the right number. See note on Num. i. 46.

7. *In one of the cities of Gilead.*—By transposing a yod, and reading בעיר, instead of בערי, it will be 'in the city of Gilead,' which agrees with all the ancient versions.

7. *In one of the cities of Gilead.*—Common sense required the introduction of the two words in Italics (*one of*) in our translation. Houbigant remarks that all the ancient versions have 'in the city of Gilead;' and this should have been adopted as the true reading. See the preceding note.

9. *He sent abroad.*—That is, 'married them into other families.' The wife follows the husband. Hence the Latin expressions 'ducere uxorem,' or 'uxorem accipere,' with respect to the marriage of a man; and 'viro nubere,' with respect to that of a woman.

CHAP. XIII. VER. 6. *Very terrible.*—Rather, 'very venerable, and full of majesty.' Such as was the countenance of St. Stephen, Acts vi. 15.

16. *And if thou wilt offer.*—Rather, 'but if thou wilt offer,' &c.

CHAP. XIV. VER. 10. *And Samson made there a feast.*—At these nuptial feasts, which appear to have been common in

all countries, every species of merriment prevailed; and Samson's riddle was proposed in compliance with the customary amusements, in the same manner as the thirty companions were brought by his wife's friends, as a sort of bride-men, to do honor to his marriage.

12. *And Samson said unto them, I will now put forth a riddle unto you.*]—This shews how ancient the custom was, (which we find afterwards among the Greeks) of proposing questions to be resolved in their feasts and compotations, that the time might not be spent merely in eating and drinking, but that there might be something to exercise the wit and ingenuity of the guests. Such riddles as were contrived to puzzle and perplex were called by the name of γρίφοι, to which the scholiast on Aristophanes gives the term παραινων ζητημα, i. e. a question proposed at table over their wine.—See Bochart, Hieroz. lib. iv. cap. 12.

It should be observed, also, that they incurred a forfeiture equal to the reward, if they failed altogether in their answers.

13. *Thirty sheets.*]—The original word סדינים, *Sidanim*, from which the word Sindon, 'fine linen,' seems to be derived, in all probability meant a kind of body linen, more like our shirts than sheets; as the thirty changes of garments, mentioned immediately after, certainly signified their outer robes, and are equivalent to what we should now call suits of clothes.

8. *The carcase of the lion.*]—That lions were not uncommon in Judea appears from many passages in Scripture. Among others, see Jer. v. 6; 2 Kings xvii. 25; 1 Sam. xvii. 34; 2 Sam. xxiii. 20. John Phocas, describing the country of Judea, six centuries ago, says that troops of lions inhabited the thickets near the Jordan; and St. Jerome, on Zech. xi. attests the same fact. Aristotle and Pliny mention the lions of Syria.

The swarm of bees, which, after a time, had settled in the remains of the lion, demonstrate that this insect was very numerous in Judea. This swarm, then, might as well settle in the cavity of the dry bony ribs of this lion, as in the hollow of a rock; and it is every way credible, that the skeleton of this animal was thrown into some private place, as Samson turned aside to visit it. That bees have swarmed in dry bones, we have the testimony of Herodotus, lib. v. cap. 114.; Seranus, and Aldrovandus, Insect. lib. i. p. 110. Indeed, as bones in their nature, when dry, are exceedingly dry, there is no more to be said against such a residence for bees than against the same among stones, rocks, &c.

If these conjectures be reasonable, it will follow that Samson experienced considerable delays in his Philistine courtship.

Bees do not form combs, and produce honey, in a moist carcase; nor at all times of the year; nor in a few days' time. These considerations may, perhaps, contribute to support the idea that the word rendered 'days,' means a considerable portion of time, though it will not determine that portion to be the extent of a year. Perhaps Samson, though strong as a champion, might not have been very persuasive as a lover.

It is worth while to notice several phrases used in this story; 1. The character of honey, as the prime of sweets then known; sugar not being in common use. 2. The equivocation in the word 'strength;' implying strength of limb and powers, and strength in reference to smell or taste. 3. The expression of 'ploughing with my heifer,' to signify committing improprieties with my wife. As this is not a usual phrase with us, it may be agreeable to see it justified by equivalent expressions in ancient authors. Theognis, v. 579, says, 'I hate a profligate woman, and an impudent man, who ploughs the field of another;' and Plautus, speaking of an adulterer, says,

Fundum alienum arat, suum incultum deserit.

'He ploughs the field of another, but leaves his own untilled.'
—So *Virgil*, *Georg.* lib. iii. v. 135.

—— Nimio ne luxu obtusior usus

Sit genitali arvo, sulcosque oblimet inertes.

The version of the Septuagint, in the Complutensian edition, supports this opinion. It must, however, be acknowledged, that the verb 'to plough,' is not always taken in this metaphorical sense: witness the proverb, *Alienâ arare vitulâ*, to plough with the heifer of another; which is spoken of plagiaries, who employ in their own service, the labors and means of success, which others had prepared for themselves; and this may be the sense of Samson's answer, 'If you had not employed the confidence of my wife,—what was my peculiar property,—if you had not violated my secrecy,—you had not explained my riddle;' which leaves the personal honor of this woman unpolluted, though it detracts from her prudence and fidelity; which offence, it should appear, was not forgiven by the indignant Samson till long after.—*Companion to the Holy Bible, Expos. Index.*—See p. 83.

14, 15. *And they could not in three days expound the riddle. And it came to pass on the seventh day, &c.*—The Septuagint reads, 'and it came to pass on the fourth day,' &c. which, says Dr. Wall, is certainly right; for it appears from verse 17, that she wept the remainder of the seven days. But if they did not threaten her till the seventh day, there could have been no time

left for weeping. The Syriac and Arabic versions agree with the Septuagint.

CHAP. XV. VER. 1. *I will go in to my wife into the chamber.*]—‘In one of the halls of the seraglio at Constantinople,’ says De La Motraye, ‘the eunuch made us pass by several little chambers, with the doors shut, like the cells of monks, or nuns, as far as I could judge by one that another eunuch opened, which was the only one I saw, and by the outside of others.’ The harems are sanctuaries, as sacred and inviolable, for persons pursued by justice, for any crime, debt, &c. as the Roman Catholic churches in Italy, Spain, Portugal, &c. though the grand signior’s power over his creatures is such, that he may send some of his eunuchs even there to apprehend those who resist his will.—*De La Motraye*, vol. i. p. 242.

The harems of the Greeks are almost as sacred as those of the Turks; so that the officers of justice dare not enter, without being sure that a man is there, contrary to the law; and if they should go in, and not find what they look for, the woman may punish, and even kill them, without being molested for any infringement of the law. On the contrary, the relations would have a right to make reprisals, and demand satisfaction for such violation.

That the word חדרה means a woman’s chamber, appears from this text. See also Cant. iii. 4. This representation illustrates the story of Michal’s stratagem to save David; in which, observe, that to effect his purpose, Saul sent messengers; but these messengers treated the harem of Michal (the king’s daughter) with too much respect to enter it, at first; but being authorised afresh by Saul, they entered even into her chamber, and during the delay occasioned by their respect, David escaped. How urgent was this order of Saul, which thus, in the person of his daughter, violated the propriety and decorum due to the sex!

This almost sanctity of the harem, agrees also with the story of Jael and Sisera: for doubtless, Sisera expected the greatest security, in retiring into the private tent of Jael; and, certainly, if the harems of the Greeks (a conquered and despised nation) are now ‘almost as sacred as those of the Turks,’ the private tent of the wife of Heber, the Kenite, might have been esteemed a sanctuary, sufficiently secure from intrusion, among the Israelites, with whom she was in alliance.—See *Harmer*.

4. *Three hundred foxes.*]—It appears from various texts of Scripture, that these creatures, were very numerous in Judea. But under the name of שועלים, which we translate *foxes*, may be comprehended a species of gregarious animals called *thoes*, somewhat resembling foxes, of which it is said two

hundred have been seen together. Before the invention of fire-arms, and before dogs were trained to hunting, wild animals of every kind must have been much more numerous than they are at present. Sylla, we read, produced at the Roman games a hundred lions. Cæsar, on a similar occasion, exhibited four hundred, and Pompey nearly six hundred, beside a vast number of other animals. It is probable, that the creatures called 'foxes' were caught in nets; and we have no reason to suppose, that Samson produced them on the same day, or that he did not devote a week, or fortnight to the purpose. See the next note.

However, by a very trifling alteration of the text, that is, by writing *schoalim* for *schualim*, we may read 'sheaves' instead of 'foxes,' and the word **כנף** may very well be interpreted 'end,' as well as 'tail.' If this slight alteration of the original be admitted, we may suppose that Samson set fire to three hundred sheaves of corn, 'laying them end to end,' with a view to spread the conflagration, and to render it as destructive as possible. See, however, the next note.

5. *And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines.*—There is reason to think that there was nothing new or uncommon in this operation, as it was the most obvious for the end proposed that the invention of man could devise. We accordingly find that Ovid alludes to the practice, and mentions that foxes with firebrands were every year exhibited at Rome, and killed in the Circus. For it was the custom in many places to sacrifice, by way of retaliation, every animal, whether goat or swine, which did particular injury to the fruits of the earth. In consequence of this, they introduced these foxes, which had been employed for that purpose with fire-brands.

Cur igitur missæ vinctis ardentia tædis

Terga ferant vulpes, causa docenda mihi.

He then mentions an instance of much injury done by a fox so accoutred by fire.

Quà fugit incendit vestitos messibus agros,

Damnosis vires ignibus aura dabat.

On this account the whole race, according to the poet, were condemned at the festival called Cerealia, to be in their turns set on fire.

Utque luat poenas gens hæc, Cerealibus ardet,

Quoque modo segetes perdidit ipsa perit.

FAST. lib. iv. 681. 707.

It is alluded to proverbially more than once by Lycophron, and seems to have been well known in Greece. He makes

Cassandra represent Ulysses as a man both of cunning and mischief, and styles him very properly λαμπουρις, 'a fox with a fire-brand at his tail;' for wherever he went, mischief followed, v. 344. Suidas also takes notice of this custom, when he speaks of a kind of beetle, which the Bæotians named tipha. They imagined that if to this they were to fasten some inflammable matter, it would be easy to set any thing on fire. He adds, that this was sometimes practised with foxes.—See *Bryant's Observations*, p. 154; and compare 2 Sam. xiv. 30.

The reader will observe, that instead of 'he let them go,' the original may be rendered, 'he put them' (i. e. the sheaves) 'into,' &c.

6. *Burned her and her father with fire.*—The savage threat uttered in the last chapter, ver. 15, was here, we find, carried into effect. But who, on hearing the expressions of such vindictive rage, or on reading the narrative of such horrid events, can avoid being shocked at the barbarous state of human nature in those remote times, and blessing himself that he lives in a period of the world, which has felt the beneficial influence of Christianity?

Instead of the present text, some MSS. and some of the ancient versions, with the Septuagint, read 'burnt her and her father's house.'

8. *And he smote them hip and thigh.*—This appears to be a proverbial expression, signifying a furious attack, and an entire overthrow.

14. *Against him.*—'On meeting him.'—*Dr. Geddes.*

15. *And he found a new jaw-bone of an ass, &c.*—The spirit of strength which had lately come upon Samson, and enabled him to burst the bands that had confined him, enabled him also to manifest prodigious exertion of another kind. We have formerly supposed that Samson did not dwell alone on the rock Etam; but he had some attendants, who would, on occasion, support their master. From the construction of the words, it may be suspected that Samson wielding the jaw-bone, struck dead with it the chief of those who opposed him: and the rout of the enemy became general; for, I do not find that it is absolutely necessary to say 'he slew,' i. e. killed, though he certainly defeated a thousand men, and might have maimed many of them. The word may signify that he beat them; but, in a military acceptation, to beat is not strictly to destroy. Perhaps, as afterwards, on another occasion, when the Philistines saw that Goliath was dead, they fled; so now, when they saw their leader killed, they were panic-struck.

This idea arises from attributing to the word, 'aleph,' the sense of chieftain, which it frequently appears to have. The

construction of the passage would be, 'he slew with it,' i. e. the jaw-bone, 'a thousander,' or the chieftain of a thousand, where the word for slew is (יָ, *jak*); but when Samson himself composes his song of victory, he says:

With the jaw-bone of an ass—a heap—heaps; (one heap—two heaps,)

With the jaw-bone of an ass, have I beat a thousander—a chief: *aleph aish*.

Where, beside the similarity of sound in the original words, *belehi hechamor chamor chamoretim*, referring to 'the ass, the heap, the heaps,' we observe the word rendered 'I have slain,' (ver. 16.), is הִכִּיתִי, which signifies to beat, as an army is beaten, or, to beat them to atoms. I am persuaded there is a play of words in these verses, of much the same nature as the play of words in Samson's famous riddle, which is not easy to preserve in a translation. There is even, as appears to me, an equivocation in them; and possibly the word *aish*, in the sense of chief, is added, to explain the sense in which the word *aleph* is to be taken; as *aleph* signifies both 'a leader of a body of men,' suppose a thousand, and 'a thousand' as a leading number.—See Companion to the Bible, and note on Num. i. 46.

16. *Heaps upon heaps.*]—By neglecting the punctuation of the Masora, Houbigant reads, agreeably to the ancient versions, 'I have destroyed them,' or 'thrown them into confusion.' See the verb הָמַר.

17. *He cast away the jaw-bone out of his hand, &c.*]—Samson threw away the jaw-bone, after the service it had done him, and called the place 'the throwing away of the jaw-bone,' Ramath-lehi. Then being thirsty, he prayed, and God clave an hollow place that was in Lehi; not in the jaw-bone of the ass, but in the place named Lehi, in remembrance of the victory obtained by a jaw-bone. I would even query, whether the violence with which the jaw-bone was thrown away by Samson, did not make a breach, or open a crevice in the rock, and from this breach issued water; that part of the rock, which before confined it, being broken off: for I observe, that Samson is said to beat, to beat to pieces, his enemies; and a word of the same import, is the root of the word *mactesh* rendered 'the hollow place,'—why not 'the broken place,' which was in Lehi? If this be just, we see the reason of the name of the fountain, *Oin hakura asher belehi*, 'the fountain of invocation in Lehi;' with the veracity of the remark, 'it exists to this day;' which, if it had issued merely from the alveole, the hole of a tooth in the jaw-bone of an ass, is hardly within the compass of credibility; as the jaw itself must have perished in a

few years at farthest. Supposing, therefore, that this addition was made by Ezra, as many such observations were, it is demonstrative against the issuing of this fountain from the jaw-bone of the ass. Maktesh is the name of a place. (Zephaniah i. 11.) Josephus and the Chaldee corroborate this statement; the latter, indeed, supposes the very same facts. The Septuagint (Vatican copy) calls this fountain a pit, λακκον. The Alexandrine copy, and the Complutensian, call it Siagonos; and Josephus says this place was afterwards called Siagon, 'the jaw.' This is the sentiment also of Usher, Annal. ad an. 3578. Compan. to Bible.

CHAP. XVI. VER. 13. *With the web.*—After these words, the Septuagint adds, 'and fastened it by driving a peg into the wall, I shall be weak as another man; and as he slept, Delilah took the seven locks of his head, and wove them into a web, and fastened it with a peg to the wall, then she cried out,' &c. This seems necessary to complete the sense; and appears to have been inadvertently omitted by the Hebrew copyist. Dr. Kennicott very judiciously observes, that the omission begins and ends with the same word; and that the same word occurring in different places is a very common cause of omission in Hebrew manuscripts.

17. *He told her all his heart, and said unto her, There hath not come a razor upon my head.*—Pliny (Nat. Hist. lib. xii. cap. 20.) has preserved the memory of several men remarkable for their great strength. The heathens were so well acquainted with the circumstances of Samson's history, that from it they formed the fable of Nisus, the king of Megara, upon whose hair the fortune of his kingdom depended.—Bp. Patrick in loc.

27. *There were upon the roof about three thousand.*—Samson therefore must have been in a court, or area below; and consequently the temple will be of the same kind with the ancient *τεμενη*, or sacred inclosures, which were only surrounded either in part, or on all sides, with some plain or cloistered buildings. Several palaces, *doutwanas*, (as the courts of justice are called in those countries) are built in this fashion. On their public festivals and rejoicings, a great quantity of sand is strewed upon the area, for the pellowans, or wrestlers to fall on; whilst the roofs of these cloisters are crowded with spectators, to admire their strength and activity. I have often seen numbers of people diverted in this manner on the roof of the dey's palace at Algiers; which, like many more of the same quality and denomination, has an advanced cloister, over against the gate of the palace, (compare Esth. v. 1.) made in the fashion of a large pent-house, supported by one or two contiguous pillars in the front, or else in the centre. In such open structures as

these, the bashaws, kadees, and other great officers, distribute justice, and transact the public affairs of their respective provinces.

Here likewise they have their public entertainments, as the lords and others of the Philistines had in the house of Dagon. On a supposition, therefore, that in the house of Dagon there was a cloistered building of this kind, the pulling down of the front or centre pillars which supported it, would alone be attended with the like catastrophe that happened to the Philistines.—See *Dr. Shaw's Travels*.

29. *Samson took hold of the two middle pillars upon which the house stood.*]—The sentiments of the great Sir Christopher Wren on this peculiar fabric will afford more satisfaction to the intelligent reader than the opinions of commentators, who in general are not competent judges. ‘In considering what this fabric must be, that could at one pull be demolished, I conceive it was an oval amphitheatre, the scene in the middle, where a vast roof of cedar-beams, resting round upon the walls, centered all upon one short architrave, that united two cedar pillars in the middle; one pillar would not be sufficient to unite the ends of at least one hundred beams that tended to the centre; therefore, I say, there must have been a short architrave resting on two pillars, upon which all the beams tending to the centre of the amphitheatre might be supported. Now, if Samson, by his miraculous strength pressing on one of these pillars, moved it from its basis, the whole roof must of necessity fall.’—*Parentalia*, p. 359.

CHAP. XVII. VER. 2. *About which thou cursedst.*]—Houbigant renders this, ‘and for which you put me to my oath;’ connecting the whole sentence thus: ‘the eleven hundred shekels of silver, which thou saidst in my hearing were taken from thee, and for which thou didst put me to my oath, behold, are with me,’ &c. The Arabic version is nearly the same.

7. *Of the family of Judah.*]—It could have been only by his mother's side; though Kimchi observes, this was not an unusual mode with the Jews of deriving genealogies. Houbigant is of opinion, that these words are surreptitious, and might have been transferred from the margin to the text.

10. *Ten shekels of silver by the year.*]—Instead of ‘shekels,’ ten of which would not have been equal to more than twenty-five shillings of our money, the original ידין means, in the opinion of Paucton, (*Métrologie*, p. 357.) ‘ten Talmudic Minæ,’ or large silver pieces, each of which was equal in value to twenty-five shekels, or one hundred drachms. The annual stipend of Micah would then amount to nearly thirty pounds

of our money. See note on Matt. xxvi. 15; and Jewish Coins, &c. in Prolegom.

The Septuagint reads *εις ἡμέραν*, 'by the day.' So, also, the Syriac.

CHAP. XVIII. VER. 6. *Before the Lord is your way.*]—That is, wherever you go, you are in the presence of God, who will guide and direct your path.

30. *The son of Gershom the son of Manasseh.*]—The Vulgate reads, 'the son of Moses,' which Dr. Kennicott thinks the right reading. The Manasseh in our present text could not possibly be the head of the tribe so called; and, if the present reading be correct, it must have been some other person belonging to the tribe of Levi, of the same name. It is said by Kimchi, that the Jews, deeply concerned for the honor of their great law-giver, and much distressed that a grandson of his should be the first priest of idolatry among his countrymen, ventured on a pious fraud, placing over the Hebrew name of Moses the letter מ, which, by the help of Masoretic pointing, might at first be mistaken for Manasseh, and was at length admitted into the text.

30. *The captivity of the land.*]—By a slight alteration of the Hebrew text, substituting *הארון*, the *ark*, instead of *הארץ*, the *land*, the anachronism is avoided, and the present verse is in harmony with the assertion in the following. This alteration was suggested by the learned Houbigant.

CHAP. XIX. VER. 1. *Concubine.*]—The word *פילגש*, which we translate 'concubine,' means a very different person from what is generally understood by it. In the sacred writers, a concubine is a lawful wife, though not wedded with all the forms and ceremonies of the Jewish ritual. Hence the Levite is called 'her husband,' ver. 3. Abarbanel and others think that a concubine was a wife taken without any marriage-portion, or dower, and therefore inferior, in point of rank and importance, to the mistress of the family. It appears that the children of concubines did not inherit their father's fortune; but he might provide for them, and make them such presents as he thought proper. Thus Abraham, by his wife Sarah, had Isaac, who was his heir; but he had other children by his concubines, Hagar and Keturah, for whom he made some provision, though he did not put them on an equality with Isaac.

2. *Played the whore against him.*]—The Alexandrine copy of the Septuagint reads, 'was angry with him.' So also St. Jerome in Mic. cap. v. The Vatican copy, 'went away from him.' And the Chaldee paraphrase is, 'she despised him.' None of the versions seem to give us any idea of the crime of adultery, or fornication. Houbigant suspects that there is a slight error

in the Hebrew text, and would read, 'she was alienated from him;' but as Grotius observes, the Hebrew word (אָנִי) may, by an easy metaphor, mean this, without supposing any error. Some such interpretation as the versions give, renders the passage more natural, and more consistent with the interesting events that follow. Had her transgression been such as to justify the strong expression in our translation, her husband would scarcely have made such haste to follow her, nor would he have been so anxious to bring about a reconciliation.

9. *Behold, the day groweth to an end.*]—'It is the pitching-time of the day.' See the marginal reading. The term *pitching*, here used, undoubtedly refers to tents, and intimates that the day was so far advanced as to make it proper to pitch a tent, or to halt for the night. In the latter part of the afternoon, eastern travellers begin to look out for a proper place in which to pass the night. So it is said in the preface to Dr. Shaw's *Travels*, (p. 17.) 'Our constant practice was to rise at break of day, set forward with the sun, and travel to the middle of the afternoon; at which time we began to look out for the encampments of the Arabs; who, to prevent such parties as ours from living at free charges upon them, take care to pitch in woods, valleys, or places the least conspicuous.'—*Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 238.

18. *I am now going to the house of the Lord.*]—The Septuagint reads, Εἰς τὸν οἶκον μου ἔγω πορεύομαι, 'I am going to my own house.' This is probably the right reading, because we find, ver. 29, that he really went home; yet he might have gone previously to Shiloh, or to 'the house of the Lord,' because that also was in mount Ephraim, for the purpose of returning thanks for the restoration of his wife, as Bp. Patrick observes; or to offer there an expiation for her sin.

19. *Straw and provender for our asses.*]—Beside provisions for themselves, travellers in the East are obliged to carry food for the beasts on which they ride, or carry their goods. That food is of different kinds. They make little or no hay in those countries, and are therefore very careful of their straw, which they cut into small bits, with an instrument which at the same time threshes out the corn; this chopped straw, with barley, beans, and balls made of bean and barley-meal, or of the pounded kernels of dates, are what they feed them with.

The officers of Solomon are accordingly said to have brought, 'every man according to his charge,' barley and straw for the horses and dromedaries, 1 Kings iv. 27, 28. Not straw to litter them with, there is reason to think, for it is not now used in those countries for that purpose; but chopped straw for the animals to eat with their barley.—See *Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 186.

24. *Do with them what seemeth good unto you.*]—Nothing can give a more forcible idea of the barbarous state of the world at this period, or of the wretched and degraded condition of women, than the facility with which a parent seems to give up a daughter to gratify something more than brutal lust, and the shocking incidents that are recorded in this chapter. We find a similar instance, (Gen. xix. 8.) in the case of Lot. If called on to assign any specific cause for this depravity, we may mention, as the most probable, perhaps, the legal permission of concubinage and polygamy. Whenever man would carry pleasure to excess, he poisons its very source; and, instead of superior happiness, he spreads around him vice, depravity, and misery.

29. *And when he was come into his house, he took a knife, and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her, together with her bones, into twelve pieces, and sent her into all the coast of Israel.*]—Interpreters say but little concerning the real views of the Levite in this transaction. They merely intimate, that it was done to excite a general indignation against the authors of the injury which he had sustained. His motives certainly were good, and he intended to unite the whole nation in vengeance against a crime, in which it was interested: but as they might be checked in the extent of the punishment by the number, the credit, and the power, of the offenders; by the natural commiseration which is felt for those who are of the same blood; or by an aversion to involve a city in destruction; he adopted a method, which put them to the indispensable necessity of espousing his cause. The only part which he had to take was, either to cut the body of his wife in pieces, which he did, or else that of an ox, or other like animal, which had been devoted, or offered in sacrifice, and to send a part of it to each tribe. In consequence of this, every tribe entered into an indissoluble engagement to see justice done him for the injury which he had received. This is what the interpreters of scripture seem not to have known, and which it is necessary to explain.

The ancients had several ways of uniting themselves together by strict ties, which lasted for a stipulated time. Among these may be noticed the sacrifice of Abraham, the circumstances of which are mentioned Gen. xv. 9, &c. Another method was, to take a bullock offered, or devoted in sacrifice, cut it in pieces, and distribute it. All who had a piece of this devoted bullock were thenceforward connected, and were to concur in carrying on the affair, which had given occasion for the sacrifice. But as this devoting and dividing was variously practised, it also pro-

duced different engagements. If he who was at the expense of the sacrifice were a public person, or in high office, he sent of his own accord a piece of the victim to all who were subject to him; and by this act he obliged them to enter into his views. If the sacrifice were offered by a private person, those only who voluntarily took a piece of the sacrifice entered into a strict engagement to espouse his interest. Connections of this kind derived their force from the deities, in honor of whom the sacrifice was offered; from the true God, when made by the Jews; from idols, when made by the Gentiles. The Jews were content to invoke and take the Lord to witness; whereas the Pagans never failed to place upon an altar of green turf the deities who presided over their covenant. These deities were called common, because they were the common deities of all who were thus united, and received in common the honors which they thought proper to pay them.

A direct proof of these facts is recorded in 1 Sam. xi. 7. 'And Saul took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, Whosoever cometh not forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall it be done unto his oxen. And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.' Another proof is drawn from the customs observed by the Scythians and Molossians. Lucian thus speaks of what passed between these people upon urgent occasions. 'When any one had received an injury, and had not the means of avenging himself, he sacrificed an ox; and cut it into pieces, which he caused to be dressed and publicly exposed; then he spread out the skin of the victim, and sat upon it, with his hands tied behind him. All who chose to take part in the injury which had been committed, took up a piece of the ox, and swore to supply and maintain for him, one five horses, another ten, others still more; some infantry, each according to his strength and ability. They who had only their person, engaged to march themselves. Now, an army composed of such soldiers, far from retreating, or disbanding, was invincible, as it was engaged by oath.'

These circumstances, compared with the account given of the Levite's conduct, and the subsequent behaviour of the tribes, clearly point out, that the method used by the Levite to obtain redress was consistent with the established usages of the times, and effected the punishment and retribution which he desired.—*Burder's Orient. Cust.*—See note on Gen. xv. 10.

CHAP. XX. VER. 1. *From Dan even to Beer-sheba.*—That is, from one end of the country to the other. See the Map.

1. *Mizpeh.*]—This was a city on the west of the Jordan, situated on the confines of Judah and Benjamin. It was very near Shiloh, and a convenient place for the meeting of all the people, as it afforded them an opportunity of consulting the divine oracle with ease and expedition. See *Reland*, p. 900; and *Dr. Wells*, vol. ii. p. 8.

15. *Twenty and six thousand men.*]—Here, as in many other places, the Septuagint is at variance with the printed Hebrew copies. It reads, ‘twenty-three thousand.’ Both, probably, are wrong; and it is in vain to attempt to reconcile them, or to assign any specific cause for the difference. It is said, (ver. 46) that ‘there fell of the Benjamites, on the third day, twenty-five thousand.’ In a former engagement, we read (ver. 35) that ‘the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjamites, twenty-five thousand one hundred men.’ And we learn (ver. 47) that ‘six hundred fled to the wilderness.’ These added together make a total of fifty thousand seven hundred men; whereas, according to the text, the number of the Benjamites were originally only twenty-six thousand, which, added to the inhabitants of Gibeah, amounts only to twenty-six thousand seven hundred.

This is one of the many occasions which must convince us, that errors have been committed by the copyists in transcribing, or interpreting the Hebrew numerals; and that the perplexity and confusion arising from comparing the Hebrew text with itself, when opportunity offers, and with the different ancient versions, appear, on some occasions, to be inextricable. See note on Numb. chap. i. ver. 46.

16. *There were seven hundred chosen men left-handed.*]—Houbigant and Dr. Wall think, with great probability, that the words ‘seven hundred’ have been here erroneously repeated by the Hebrew transcriber. They are not in the Septuagint, nor in the Vulgate. Instead of ‘left-handed,’ it would be better to read, with the Greek, ‘ambidexter;’ that is, men who could use both hands alike. See note on chap. iii. ver. 15.

18. *The house of God.*]—Perhaps we should read here and ver. 26, ‘to Beth-el.’ It is well known that the meaning of Beth-el is, ‘the house of God.’

42. *And them which came out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them.*]—‘For they who came from their own city, destroyed them in the mid-way.’—*Dr. Geddes.*

47. *Unto the rock Rimmon.*]—The following extract from Harmer will satisfactorily illustrate this and other similar texts of Scripture. ‘When the grand signior ordered the bashaw of Damascus to make the emir Faccardine a prisoner, Faccardine

shut himself up in the hollow of a great rock, with a small number of his officers, where the bashaw besieged him some months, who was on the point of blowing up the rock, when the emir surrendered.'

'Nor is this to be supposed a kind of defence which Samson (Judg. xv. 8.) and Faccardine made use of, merely from their being unable, on account of a surprise, to recover some place of great safety; they were considered as very strong places, and made use of frequently in that country, in the time of the Croisades, by those Christians who went from the west, and were perfectly well acquainted with the manner of fortifying places in Europe in that age. One of those places, which the history of the Croisades mentions, was in the territory of Sidon: but in the days of the prophets, Edom seems to have been distinguished from the other eastern nations by this sort of fastnesses.'—Compare Obad. ver. 3; Jer. xlix. 16.—*Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 399.

CHAP. XXI. VER. 14. *Came again.*]—That is, 'returned.'

21. *The daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances.*]—These dances, though celebrated in the neighbourhood of the vineyards of Shiloh, appear to have been at stated periods, as a peculiar and religious festival, or solemnity, observed by the young women of that town. For,

1. It appears to have been kept by the virgins of Shiloh exclusively, they alone dancing, and being at the same time unattended by the men; not to mention the supposed solitude of the vineyards, during the celebration of this festival, whereas, at the time of vintage, they would have been crowded with people.

2. It was a religious solemnity; for it is expressly called 'a feast of the Lord,' or, rather, 'of Jehovah,' verse 19.

3. It seems to have been peculiar to the inhabitants of that town; because there appears to be no assignable reason for mentioning Shiloh only, if it had been a feast common to all Israel. The word *חג*, *chag*, indeed, is used to express the three great annual feasts of the Jews; but not them only, as appears from Exod. xxxii. 5; and 1 Kings xii. 32. The use of the verb in 1 Sam. xxx. 16, shews that it expresses any kind of rejoicing.

4. As there were some voluntary, annual solemnities observed by Israel; some of the mournful kind, as that for the daughter of Jephthah, Judges xi. 40; others of a joyous sort, as the days of Purim, Esther ix. 20—28; this dancing solemnity seems to have been one of those voluntary, joyous appointments, but peculiar to Shiloh.—See *Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 287.

Every sciolist in history will recollect, on the present occasion, the rape of the Sabines, in the reign of Romulus, the first king

of Rome. See the opinions and conjectures of various commentators and critics on this subject, in that treasure of Biblical learning, *Poole's Synopsis*.

The indiscriminate massacre of the people of Jabesh-gilead, (ver. 10.) says Dr. Gray, and the rape of the virgins at Shiloh, (v. 21—23.) were certainly stamped with marks of injustice and cruelty; and must be condemned on those principles, which the Scriptures have elsewhere furnished, though, in the brevity of the sacred history, they are here recorded without comment.

RUTH.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Book of Ruth is a kind of supplement, or appendix, to the Book of Judges, and may be considered as an introduction to the history of David. In the Hebrew canon it composed but one book with the former; and though various opinions have been entertained respecting its chronology, it is properly placed in our Bibles between the books of Judges and Samuel.

This book has been by some considered as the production of Hezekiah; by others it has been attributed to Ezra: but it was in all probability written by Samuel, agreeably to the opinion of many Jews and Christians; and the prophet may be supposed, by this addition to the Book of Judges, to have brought down the history of the Israelites to the time of his own birth. It certainly was written not only after the Judges had ceased to rule, but after the birth, if not after the anointing, of David, whose descent from Judah the sacred writer seems to have made it a principal object of this book to certify, because, agreeably to the prophecy of Jacob, the Messiah was to spring from that tribe. With this view, he traces back the lineage of Boaz to Pharez, the son of Judah, and grandson of Jacob.

The book contains an account of the conversion of Ruth, a Moabite; and, according to Jewish tradition, of the royal race of Moab, which nation was descended from Lot, and settled near the land of Judah, at the end of the Salt Sea. Ruth having married Mahlon, the son of Elimelech, who had sojourned in Moab, on account of a famine which prevailed in Judea, resolved, on the death of Mahlon, to accompany

her mother-in-law in her return to her country. After their arrival at Bethlehem, the former residence of Naomi, Ruth was compelled, by her distress, to claim kindred with Boaz, who, as the law of Moses directed, took her to wife, and begat a son, from whom David descended.

It may be here observed, that the Holy Spirit, by recording the adoption of a Gentile woman into that family from which Christ was to derive his origin, might intend to intimate the comprehensive design of the Christian dispensation.

It must be remarked, also, that in the estimation of the Jews it was disgraceful to David to have derived his birth from a Moabitess; and Shimei, in his revilings against him, is supposed by the Jews to have tauntingly reflected on his descent from Ruth. This book, therefore, contains an intrinsic proof of its own verity, as it records a circumstance so little flattering to the sovereign of Israel; and it is scarcely necessary to appeal to its admission into the canon of Scripture, for a testimony of its authentic character; or to mention that the evangelists, in describing our Saviour's descent, follow its genealogical accounts.

The story is extremely interesting: the distress of Naomi; her affectionate concern for her daughters; the reluctant departure of Orpah; the dutiful attachment of Ruth; and the sorrowful return to Bethlehem, are very beautifully told. The simplicity of manners, likewise, which is shewn in the account of Ruth's industry and attention to Naomi; of the elegant charity of Boaz; and of his acknowledgment of his kindred with Ruth, affords a very pleasing contrast to the turbulent scenes which had been described in the preceding Book. St. Jerome has remarked, that Ruth, in her wandering condition, verified the prophecy of Isaiah, who predicted that 'the daughters of Moab should be as a wandering bird cast out of the nest.'—*Dr. Gray.*

CHAPTER I.

VER. 5. *And the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.*]—Rather, ‘by her two sons.’ In other words, she was bereft of her two sons and her husband.

14. *Orpah kissed her mother-in-law.*]—The Septuagint here adds ‘and returned to her own people.’ This seems a very natural addition, and agrees with the assertion in the next verse. Houbigant has adopted it as part of the text. Some commentators suppose that these women, who had married the sons of Naomi, must have been proselytes to the Jewish religion, otherwise it could not have been lawful for Jews to marry them. But they seem to forget with what impunity the laws of Moses had been violated, in a multiplicity of instances, since the death of Joshua; and that the inspired historian informs us, more than once, ‘every man did that which was right in his own eyes.’

CHAP. II. VER. 7. *That she tarried a little in the house.*]—It appears from Aben-Ezra, that it was usual to erect a tent in the field, during the harvest time, for the refreshment of the reapers and other laborers. This is what is meant by ‘the house’ on the present occasion.

The interchange of the two words ‘tent’ and ‘house,’ frequently appears in the Old Testament. Thus, the goodly raiment of Esau, which was left in the custody of Rebekah, is said to be ‘with her in the house,’ Gen. xxvii. 15; though it is certain it was kept in a tent. On the other hand, when Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, wanted to cause the people to abandon David, he blew a trumpet, crying ‘to your tents, O Israel!’ 2 Sam. xx. 1; though Israel did not dwell in moveable habitations, at that time, but in cities.—*Harmer*, vol. i. p. 127.

12. *Under whose wings.*]—This is a metaphor supposed to be derived from the cherubim, whose wings are represented as overspreading and covering the mercy-seat; or it may be an allusion to the warmth and protection, which the wings of birds afford their young. It is so used by our blessed Lord, Matt. xxiii. 37.

14. *And Boaz said unto her,—dip thy morsel in the vinegar.*] We are not to understand that simple vinegar is meant; but vinegar mingled with a small portion of oil: for even the Algerines indulge their miserable captives with a small portion of oil to the vinegar which they allow them with their bread, according to the account that Pitts gives of the treatment,

which he and his companions received from them, and of which he complains with some asperity.—*Harmer*, vol. i. p. 397.

Under the general term 'bread,' the Scriptures often comprehend all kinds of provisions; and by *יָמִין*, which our translators render 'vinegar,' is signified a kind of acid, or strongly fermented wine, something like old hock, perhaps, or the common table-wine of the French, which in hot seasons must have been very cooling and refreshing.

21. *Thou shalt keep fast by my young men.*—The Hebrew word here translated 'young men,' should have been rendered 'young women;' or at least 'young people.' The Septuagint has, *Μετα των κορασίων ἐμῶν*, 'with my maidens.' So also the Chaldee paraphrase; agreeably to the previous request of Boaz, ver. 8, and to the advice of her mother, Naomi, which immediately follows in the next verse.

CHAP. III. VER. 7. *He went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn.*—Such was the simplicity of those early times, that the most wealthy persons looked after their own business, both at home and in the field. These threshing-floors were covered at top to keep off the rain; but open on all sides, to give a free passage to the wind for winnowing the corn. They seem, however, to have been shut up at night, to prevent robbers from entering them, and stealing the corn, together with such instruments of husbandry, as were commonly left there.—*Fawkes*.

CHAP. IV. VER. 3. *Selleth a parcel of land.*—Rather, 'hath a field to sell.'

5. *What day thou buyest the field, &c.*—Dr. Kennicott, following the ancient versions, and availing himself of the various readings in two Hebrew manuscripts, reads, 'On the day thou takest the land of the hand of Naomi, thou must also take Ruth, the Moabite, the wife of the dead, &c.'

6. *Lest I mar mine own inheritance.*—Either he could not redeem it without injuring his fortune and present possessions; or else, being already married, and having children, he did not choose to introduce another wife into his family.

7. *A man plucked off his shoe, &c.*—In giving bills of sale, and in other forms of transferring property, it was usual for the seller to give the buyer some portion of it as a token, or evidence, that the contract was ratified and carried into effect. The Chaldee, instead of 'his shoe,' reads, 'his right-hand glove;' and it is remarkable, that gloves are called by some northern nations 'the shoes of the hands.' Rabbi Jarchi says, 'when we now purchase any thing, it is customary to give, instead of a shoe, a handkerchief, or veil.'

17. *The father of David.*—One of the principal reasons for adopting this book into the canon of Holy Scripture was, perhaps, on account of the genealogy which it gives of David. St. Matthew says, in tracing the same down to the birth of our blessed Saviour, that ‘Salmon begat Boaz of Rachab.’ We cannot now discover any motive, which should have induced St. Matthew to mention Rachab in the genealogy of Christ, unless she were some person previously spoken of in Scripture; but many reasons may be assigned why she should be introduced in the lineage, if she were the same Rahab whose conduct is mentioned by Joshua, and who, though styled רַחַב, *zénah*, in the Hebrew, and πορνῇ, by the evangelists, is celebrated as an example of faith. ‘Still, however, it may be diffidently suggested,’ says Dr. Gray, ‘that the chronological differences would be considerably less, if we could suppose her to have been a different person; and that the 400 years which intervened between the birth of Pharez, and the time of Shamgar, were filled up by Boaz and his six immediate ancestors.’ As a slight support to which, it may be remarked, that the wife of Salmon is spelt Ραχαῖ by St. Matthew, whereas in Hebrews, xi. 31. and in James, ii. 25. the harlot’s name is written Ρααῖ, as in the Septuagint version of Josh. ii. 1. There is no mention in the book of Joshua, or in any part of the Old Testament, of Rahab’s marriage with Salmon. See *Carpzovii* *Introduc. ad Lib. Biblicos*, cap. xi. § 6.

I. S A M U E L.

INTRODUCTION.

It is uncertain whether this and the following book are called the books of Samuel, because he was the author of them, or only because his history constitutes a principal part of the sacred narrative. In the Septuagint and Vulgate they are styled 'The First and Second Book of the Kings,' as being two of those four books, which contain the history of the kings of Israel and Judah. See the latter part of the present title, in our Translation of the Bible.

The two books of Samuel were in the Hebrew canon considered but as one. The Talmudists suppose that Samuel wrote the first twenty-four chapters of the first book, and that the rest was furnished by the prophets Gad and Nathan. (Vid. *Carpzovii* Introd. cap. xii.) Their reasons are principally founded on these words in the first book of Chronicles: 'Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold, they are written in the book of Samuel the seer, and in the book of Nathan the prophet, and in the book of Gad the seer.'

This opinion is supported by many writers of considerable authority, who maintain that the prophets were, in general, the historians of contemporary events. It will appear evident, at least, that the books of Samuel were written before either the books of Kings, or of Chronicles, on comparing them together; for in each of these last-mentioned books many circumstances are manifestly taken from the books of

Samuel. We may therefore assent to the general opinion, that Samuel was the author of the greater part of the first book ; which he probably composed towards the latter end of his life. From its admission into the canon, as well as from the predictions which it contains, it is certain that the book was the production of a prophet ; not to mention that it is referred to by our Saviour, in vindication of his disciples. The first book of Samuel contains a space of nearly eighty years, if we reckon from the birth of Samuel, which was about, or soon after A. M. 2868, to the death of Saul, which happened A. M. 2948.

The history opens with an account of the birth of Samuel. It describes his consecration to the ministry, and his appointment to the prophetic office; the capture of the ark ; and the completion of God's judgments on the house of Eli ; the curse on those who possessed the ark ; its return, and the signal punishment of those who daringly profaned its sanctity ; the election of Saul in conformity to the unadvised desire of the Israelites for a king ; the wars and evils which arose, as had been foretold, in consequence of this change of government ; the sins and rejection of Saul ; the anointing of David, and the first display of his piety and heroism ; the disinterested friendship of Jonathan and David ; the envious and ungenerous suspicions of Saul ; the death of Samuel ; the denunciation of God's judgments against the impiety of Saul ; in the accomplishment of which the book terminates, with the account of the miserable fate of Saul, and of his sons.

The sacred writer illustrates the characters, and describes the events of his history, in the most engaging manner. The weak indulgence of Eli is well contrasted with the firm piety of Samuel. The rising virtues of David, and the growing depravity of Saul, are also strikingly opposed.

Samuel, the reputed author of this book, was obtained by the prayers of Hannah, and dedicated from his infancy to God. He appeared as a prophet, says Dr. Gray, at a time

when the prophetic spirit was but rarely known; he accepted the supreme power in the government of his country without ambition, and executed the important duties of his office with irreproachable integrity and zeal. When required by God, he resigned his power without reluctance; and, in compliance with the Divine commands, he elected two strangers in the government, to the exclusion of his sons. He was much feared and respected by Saul, and the whole nation; and was allowed by that monarch to judge Israel ‘all the days of his life.’

The author of Ecclesiasticus justly celebrates him as a favorite servant of God, a righteous judge, and a faithful prophet. He was addressed by many revelations from God; and the miraculous circumstances which demonstrated his appointment, as well as the prophetic spirit which inspired him, were so conspicuous, ‘that all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord, who let none of his words fall to the ground.’ His first predictions concerning the destruction that impended over the house of Eli were gradually fulfilled; (see note on Prov. xv. 10.) and these were followed by others, which were accomplished with similar exactness.

CHAPTER I.

VER. 1. *Ramathaim-zophim.*]—The Septuagint has *Ἀμμαθαιμ Σιφα*. There are several places in the Holy Land called by the name of Rama. This seems to be called Ramathaim-zophim, from its being situated in a tract of country called Zuphi, or Zophim, which is in mount Ephraim. According to Eusebius and St. Jerome, it was in the district of Timnath, near Diospolis, or Lydda, and is the very same place that is called Arimathea in the Gospel. It still retains the name of Rama, and lies in the usual road taken by pilgrims from Jaffa, or Joppa, to Jerusalem, and is accordingly taken notice of by Thevenot and Le Bruyn. It appears that Rama was an-

ciently a city; but it is now nothing more than an open town under the government of the Bassa of Gaza. The latter part of the name of this place, 'zophim,' which means 'a watch-tower,' seems to have been added by way of distinction, and because it stood perhaps on a remarkable eminence. Vid. *Relandi Palæstinam*, pp. 964, 965.

5. *A worthy portion.*]—The Hebrew word אֵפֶיִם may mean 'a double portion.' So, the Syriac. See, also, *Houbigant*.

6. *And her adversary.*]—The Hebrew word צִרְתָּהּ, here translated, 'her adversary,' Dr. Waterland and Houbigant render 'her rival.'

22. *I will not go up.*]—The reader will observe, that these words being printed in Italics are substituted by the English translators. Houbigant imagines, without any necessity for addition, or change, that a word has been omitted in the Hebrew, which signified, 'I will tarry,' agreeably to what Elkanah says to her in the next verse. The Syriac Version reads, after *husband*, 'When the child shall be weaned, I will then,' &c. So the Hebrew should have been rendered; for the particle עַד may mean 'when,' or 'after that,' &c. See *Noldius*, or *Taylor*.

24. *With three bullocks.*]—Instead of this, the Septuagint has, ἐν μισθῷ τριετῶντι, 'with a bullock three years old,' which seems to be the right reading. So, also, the Syriac and Arabic. The addition of a single letter ו gives this reading, which seems to be confirmed by the definitive article ה, *the*, prefixed to bullock, verse 25, though our present translation has, improperly, *a* bullock.

28. *I have lent him.*]—Hannah says, ver. 11, 'I will give him unto the Lord;' and, as the Hebrew verb here used will admit of the same signification, the translation should have been the same.

28. *And he worshipped.*]—The Syriac, the Vulgate, and Arabic version, instead of, 'he worshipped,' read, 'they worshipped.'

CHAP. II. VER. 5. *They that were hungry, ceased.*]—There is evidently something wanting after 'ceased,' in order to complete the sentence; and Bp. Lowth very properly adds, 'to hunger.'

5. *The barren hath borne seven.*]—That is, 'many children.' Seven is one of those numbers which are used indefinitely.

5. *Is waxed feeble.*]—That is, so as not to have sufficient strength to bear any more.

6. *He bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.*]—Bp.

Lowth more properly renders this, 'he casteth down to hell, and bringeth up;' meaning by the former expression, the lowest state of degradation and misery; and by the latter, a restoration to prosperity and happiness. Compare Matt. xi. 23.

8. *Inherit the throne of glory.*]—'Possess seats of honor.'—*Dr. Geddes.*

8. *The pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them.*]—This passage, among many others, may serve to shew, that the ancient Hebrews had no idea of the roundness of the earth, much less of its annual and diurnal revolution. The contemplation, therefore, of 'the pillars,' or of any other means, by which this immense fabric was supported in the midst of space, must have given them cause to magnify and adore the incomprehensible power of God. See note on Psa. civ. 5.

9. *He will keep the feet of his saints.*]—That is, from slipping, stumbling, or falling. A metaphorical expression, meaning to preserve them from transgression, and lapsing into sin.

9. *And the wicked shall be silent in darkness.*]—That is, the wicked, when in obscurity, or in a state of misery and degradation, shall hold their peace; they shall not dare to murmur at God's justice, nor at the dispensations of his providence.

The Septuagint has here a remarkable variation, which the commentators have not noticed. It is, 'he giveth the object of his petition to him that prays, and blesseth the years of the righteous.'

10. *The ends of the earth.*]—Or, 'The delinquencies of the earth,' agreeably to some copies of the Septuagint.

10. *His king, and exalt the horn of his anointed.*]—Some commentators are of opinion that these words are prophetic of king David; some, that they are applicable to Samuel; and others that they can relate only to the Messiah. Kimchi says, there was a tradition among the Israelites, that a great king should arise in Israel, and that Hannah concludes her song of praise with celebrating this king, who was to deliver them from all their enemies. It is remarkable, as Bp. Patrick observes, that the Hebrew word MESSIAH, i. e. 'anointed,' is used here for the first time in the sacred writings.

19. *Moreover, his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him, from year to year.*]—The women made wearing apparel; and their common employment was weaving stuffs, as making cloth and tapestry is now. We have in Homer the instances of Penelope, Calypso, and Circe. There are examples of it also in Theocritus (Idyll. 15.), Terence (Heaut. act ii. sc. 2.), and many other authors. But what appears most won-

derful is, that this custom was retained at Rome among ladies of the highest rank, in a very corrupt age, since Augustus commonly wore clothes made by his wife, sister, and daughter. (*Suet. Aug. 73. See also Prov. xxxi. 13, 19.*)—*Fleury's Hist. of the Israelites, p. 72.*

20. *For the loan which is lent to the Lord.*—For this child, which thou askedst, and which, according to thy petition, thou hast given unto the Lord. See ch. i. 11.—*Dr. Waterland.*

25. *Because the Lord, &c.*—Rather, ‘for which reason,’ or ‘for which cause,’ the Lord would slay them.

27. *Did I plainly appear, &c.*—Rather, ‘Did I not plainly appear?’ &c. And ‘Did I not choose him?’ &c. in the next verse.

31. *The arm of thy father's house.*—That is, the prerogative, authority, and power; of which the arm in man being the instrument, is often used as the significant emblem. The Chaldee has, ‘I will cut off the strength of thy seed.’

32. *Thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation.*—The marginal reading, ‘thou shalt see the affliction of the tabernacle,’ appears to be the right translation; for, agreeably to this prediction, he *did* see the tabernacle deprived of the ark, which was its glory, and he lived to hear that it was taken by the Philistines, chap. iv. 4, 11, 17. But his family was not deprived of the priesthood till the days of Solomon.—*Bp. Patrick.*

33. *All the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age.*—The gradual decline, disgrace, and ruin of Eli's family, was all that this ‘man of God’ intended to predict, when he uttered these remarkable words. See the note on Prov. xv. 10.

CHAP. III. VER. 1. *There was no open vision.*—*Bp. Patrick* understands that the word ‘vision,’ as used here, includes all the ways in which God revealed himself to man. ‘The word of the Lord is said to have been precious in those days,’ because it was very rarely communicated to the Israelites. No one was then publickly acknowledged as a prophet, to whom the people might apply, for the purpose of learning the will of God; and, indeed, we read of only two prophets during all the time of the Judges. See Judges iv. 4. and vi. 8.

3. *In the temple of the Lord.*—It appears from this, and from chap. i. 9, that the tabernacle was now called ‘the temple of the Lord,’ and that the lamps did not continue burning all night, as was at first ordered. See Levit. vi. 12, 13.

18. *It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good.*—If we would make a just estimate of Eli's conduct, we must survey the catalogue of judgments denounced against him in the

preceding chapter, from the 27th verse to the end. These may be reduced to the following heads. 1. The judgments and calamities relating to his own person. 2. To his circumstances. 3. To his sons. 4. To all his posterity; and 5. To his country and religion.

Though Eli's conduct under his misfortunes is very exemplary, and commendable, yet the causes of his visitation, and the motives of God's displeasure, proceeded from an unpardonable breach of duty; so that he is no more to be excused, says Dr. Coney, than that patient is to be justified, who, bringing a disease upon himself, gains our applause by submitting to a due regimen when the malady is on him. We find Eli's virtues rather personal than relative, and employed more in the regulation of his own manners, than in restraining the vices of others; for he discovered such a partial fondness to his own family, as could admit of no extenuation, or excuse. His sons were guilty of the most flagrant and notorious crimes, for which their father reprimanded them indeed, but only in a slight and gentle manner, by no means suitable to the nature of the offence, and the condition of the offenders; nor uttered with the authority of a father, or the spirit of a judge. It must be said, that, in his judicial capacity, he connived at mal-administration; for though he did not himself make a breach in the civil constitution, he suffered it to be made by others, and permitted exorbitant demands, contrary to the rights of the people, and the laws of God, in favor of his own family.

CHAP. IV. VER. 8. *With all the plagues in the wilderness.*]—Instead of these words, the Chaldee and Syriac read, 'And did wonders in the wilderness.' Now, as the plagues were not inflicted on the Egyptians in the wilderness, Houbigant and others prefer this reading. The Septuagint has, 'Οι παταξαντες την Αιγυπτον εν παση πληγη, και εν τη ερημω, 'who smote Egypt with every plague, and in the wilderness;' alluding to the overthrow of Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea.

18. *His neck brake.*—*And he had judged Israel forty years.*]—The Septuagint reads, 'he broke his back,' and 'judged Israel twenty years.'—The neck being a continuation of the vertebræ, it was easy to confound the two words. If the chronologers could venture to take the number of the Septuagint here, says Dr. Wall, it would remove the difficulty of setting Eli's time so far back among the judges.

CHAP. V. VER. 2. *And set it by Dagon.*]—It was a custom with the heathens to offer part of whatever spoil they took in war to their gods. Accordingly, these Philistines thought that

nothing could be more acceptable to the idolatrous object of their worship, who appeared to have triumphed over Israel, than the ark of God. And therefore we read, 'they brought it into the house of Dagon, and set it by him.' R. Solomon and others think, that this idol was in the form of a fish from the middle downward; for *dag* signifies a fish. But it is certain that the upper part was in a human form; because we read, ver. 4, of his head and the palms of his hands, though no mention is made of his feet. See *Montfaucon's Antiq.* by Humphreys, vol. ii. p. 244. After the statue was mutilated, in consequence of falling, Kimchi says, that nothing but the form of a fish remained. Vid. *Seldén, De Diis Syris, Syntagm. ii. cap. 3.*

4. *The head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, were cut off upon the threshold.*—The destruction of Dagon before the ark of the Lord clearly discovered the vanity of idols, and the irresistible power of God. The circumstances attending its demolition are remarkable; and in them, it is possible, may be traced a conformity with the manner in which different nations treated the idol deities of each other. Dagon was not merely thrown down, but was also broken in pieces; and some of these fragments were found on the threshold.

There is a circumstance related in Maurice's *Modern History of Hindostan*, (vol. i. part 2. p. 296.) which seems in some points similar to what is here recorded of Dagon. Speaking of the destruction of the idol in the temple at Sumnaut, he says, that 'Fragments of the demolished idol were distributed to the several mosques of Mecca, Medina, and Gazna, to be thrown at the threshold of their gates, and trampled upon by devout and zealous musselmans.' In both instances, the situation of the 'threshold' seems to intimate the complete triumph of those who had overcome the idols, and might possibly be a customary expression of indignity and contempt.

Tibullus informs us, that to beat the head against the sacred threshold, was with many an expiatory ceremony. It probably originated with the Egyptians in the worship of Isis.

Non ego, si merui, dubitem procumbere templis,
Et dare sacratis oscula liminibus.—Lib. i. eleg. 5.

For crimes like these, I'd abject, crawl the ground,
Kiss her dread *threshold*, and my forehead wound.

GRAINGER.

6. *Smote them with emerods.*—This appears to be a corrupt spelling of hæmorrhoides, or the disease which we should now call, perhaps, 'the bleeding piles.' After this verse, the

Septuagint and Vulgate add, that 'throughout their country mice' (in great numbers we may suppose) 'were produced, and a prodigious mortality took place in their city.' Houbigant admits this into the text; and the circumstance mentioned, ver. 5. of the next chapter, makes it probable, that it originally formed part of it.

CHAP. VI. VER. 4. *Then said they, What shall be the trespass-offering which we shall return to him? They answered, Five golden emerods, &c.*—The ancient heathens used to consecrate to their gods such monuments of their deliverances, as represented the evils from which they had been rescued. They dedicated to Isis and Neptune a tablet, containing a representation of the shipwreck, from which they might have escaped. Slaves and captives, when they had regained their liberty, offered their chains. The Philistines, hoping shortly to be delivered from the emerods and mice, with which they were afflicted, sent images of both to that God from whom they expected deliverance. This is still practised among the Indians. Tavernier relates, (Travels, p. 92.) that when any pilgrim goes to a pagod for the cure of any disease, he brings the figure of the member affected, made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his quality. This he offers to his god, and then falls a singing, as all others do after they have offered. Selden also has observed, that mice were used among the ancient heathens for lustration and cleansing.—Vid. De Diis Syris, Syntag. i. cap. 6.

5. *Images of your mice that mar the land.*—William, Abp. of Tyre, informs us, that a kind of penitential council was held at Naplouse, in the year one thousand one hundred and twenty; where five and twenty canons were framed, for correcting the manners of the inhabitants of the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem, who they apprehended had provoked God to bring upon them the calamities of earthquakes, war, and famine. This last the archbishop ascribes to locusts and devouring 'mice,' which had for four years together so destroyed the fruits of the earth, that the people dreaded a total failure of their usual food.

The ravages of locusts in Palestine have been frequently taken notice of by authors; but here mice were joined with them, as making havoc of the country.—Harmer, vol. iii. p. 396.

19. *Even he smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men.*—This translation is made by an unaccountable transposition of the words, which in the Hebrew are; 'He smote of the people, threescore and ten men; fifty thousand men.' The most probable sense of which is this: 'He smote

threescore and ten men; fifty *out of* a thousand men.' That is, God was so indulgent, as not to slay all that were guilty, but only seventy of them; observing this proportion, that *out of* a thousand offenders, he smote only fifty persons; or a twentieth part: so that of fourteen hundred, who deserved punishment, he smote only seventy; which is the twentieth part of that number. This interpretation is very easy, by supplying the particle *Mem* before *aleph*, making the sense to be '*out of* a thousand.' There are many places of Scripture, where this particle is manifestly wanting, to make out the true meaning.—*Bochart*, and *Bp. Patrick*. See note on Num. i. 46.

In recording this transaction, Josephus mentions only 'seventy men,' which is a strong confirmation of the probability of the interpretation already given.

Houbigant ingeniously supposes that the seventy men 'were natives of Beth-shemesh;' and that the 'fifty thousand' were persons, who flocked from the neighbouring places to view the ark. The Hebrew is, 'seventy men, fifty thousand men.'

CHAP. VII. VER. 3. *And Ashtaroth.*—The Vulgate reads 'Baalim and Ashtaroth,' as in the next verse.

6. *Drew water, and poured it out.*—Grotius says, that the pouring out of water means the shedding of tears; and the Chaldee paraphrase has, 'They poured out their souls in penitence, like waters, before the Lord.' It is probable that this was a symbolical action expressive of their contrition, and of an earnest desire to wash away their past offences. See note on Prov. xv. 10.

11. *Under Beth-car.*—Instead of 'Beth-car,' Houbigant, following the Syriac and Arabic, reads 'Beth-shan.'

CHAP. VIII. VER. 7. *They have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.*—By a wise and painful direction of affairs, Samuel had restored the purity of religion, and rescued his nation from the power of the Philistines. At this time, the people, debauched as usual by power and prosperity, and availing themselves of the corrupt conduct of the prophet's two sons, went in a tumultuous manner and demanded a king: but the secret spring of their rebellion was the ambition of their leaders, who could live no longer without the splendor of a regal court and household, in which every one might have some prospect of shining as a distinguished officer of state. 'Give me,' say they, in Hosea xiii. 10, 'a king and princes.' They could get nothing, when their affairs led them to the residence of their poor judge, in the schools of the prophets, but the gift of the holy spirit. It was this that made their demand criminal; for the choosing of a regal, rather than an aristocratic government,

was a thing plainly indulged to them by the law of Moses, Deut xvii. 14, 15. The clause, 'whom the Lord thy God shall choose,' plainly signifies that they should take care, when they demanded a king, that they thought of no other than such a king, as was to be God's deputy. As court ambition was only, therefore, in the wicked view of these malecontents, and no foolish fears for the state, or hopes of bettering the public administration, it is evident, that compliance with their demand must have ended in the utter destruction of the religion, as well as the law of Moses. But it was God's purpose to keep them a separate people, in order to preserve the memory of himself amidst an idolatrous world; and this not being to be done, but by the preservation of their religion and laws, we must conclude He would not give way to their rebellious demand.—*Bp. Warburton.*

CHAP. IX. VER. 7. *Then said Saul to his servant, But, behold, if we go, what shall we bring the man?*—Maundrell informs us, that it is reckoned uncivil to visit, in this country, without taking something to offer, by way of present. All great men expect it as a kind of tribute due to their character and authority; so that they think themselves affronted, and indeed defrauded, when this compliment is omitted. Even in familiar visits, among inferior people, they seldom come without bringing a flower, or an orange, or some other token of their respect for the person visited; the Turks in this point keeping up the ancient Oriental custom. These words are doubtless to be understood in conformity to this eastern custom, as relating to a token of respect, and not as a price of divination. Instead of 'bring,' in this verse, we should now say 'take,' or 'carry.'

9. Houbigant justly suspects, that this verse is out of its place, and very properly introduces it after verse 11, where it naturally follows the question, 'Is the seer here?' and produces no interruption of the dialogue between Saul and his servant.

The remark respecting the use of the words 'prophet' and 'seer,' seems to prove, that this book was not written till a long time after the events had happened which it records. We know that Abraham and Balaam were called 'prophets' in the writings of Moses; but there is no reason why the expression 'beforetime in Israel' should be referred back to so remote a period. Dr. Wall, however, observes, that in the barbarous times of the judges, the common people might have substituted the word 'seer,' but that when this book was written, the original word 'prophet' was restored.

25. At the end of this verse, the Vulgate adds, 'And Saul prepared him a bed on the top of the house and slept.' The Septuagint, instead of 'Samuel communed with Saul upon the

top of the house,' has, 'And they prepared a bed for Saul on the top of the house, and he slept.' See note on Deut. xxii. 8.

CHAP. X. VER. 5. *The hill of God.*]—This was called 'the hill of God,' either because sacrifices were to be offered on it; or because a school of the prophets was established there, which served to consecrate the place. Here youth were instructed in the knowledge of the law, as well as in the duties of religion, and were called, by way of distinction, 'the sons of the prophets.' It should appear, that though those fierce people called 'the Philistines' had a garrison on the spot; yet they spared this college of the prophets, and seemed to shew a reverence to all places set apart for the purposes of religious worship.

5. *They shall prophesy.*]—That is, 'they shall sing praises;' for this is often the signification of the verb to prophesy. It is remarkable, that something like this procession with music, &c. prevails at present in Barbary. When the children have gone through the koran, their relations borrow a fine horse richly caparisoned, and carry them about the town in procession, with a book in their hands, the rest of their companions following, and all sorts of music of the country going before.—See *Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 413.

12. *Who is their father?*]—Rather, 'who is his father?' agreeably to the Septuagint, the Syriac, the Arabic, and other ancient versions. If 'their father' be the right reading, it refers to the company of prophets, verse 5, and the word 'father' must be understood as meaning their master, or instructor. See note on Gen. iv. 20.

CHAP. XI. VER. 2. *That I may thrust out all your right eyes.*]—The object of this barbarous act, was to render them incapable of serving with any effect, on similar occasions, and for similar purposes. We read of men having their thumbs and great toes cut off. The chief weapons in those days were the bow and the arrow, the sword and the shield; and the loss of the right eye would render it impossible for a man to use these without great inferiority and disadvantage.

This semi-barbarian did not propose to put out both their eyes, because then they would have been useless for manual labor, and incapable of paying him any tribute.

4. *Gibeah of Saul.*]—That is, 'Gibeah, the residence of Saul.'

7. *He took a yoke of oxen, and hewed them in pieces.*]—This was a solemn ceremony to engage all the people of Israel to enter into a league and covenant on the present occasion. See note on Judg. xix. 29.

14. *And renew the kingdom there.*]—'And there renew the kingly power.'—*Dr. Geddes.*

CHAP. XII. VER. 9. *He sold them.*—Rather, ‘he delivered them.’

11. *Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel.*—We read of no such person as ‘Bedan,’ a judge of Israel. Bp. Patrick thinks it may be a corruption, or rather a contraction of Ben-Dan, i. e. ‘the son of Dan;’ and that Gideon is meant, who was of the tribe of Dan, and who is here mentioned in the Chaldee paraphrase in connection with Samson. But this seems taking an unauthorised liberty with the Text. Houbigant, therefore, on the authority of the Septuagint, reads ‘Barak,’ instead of Bedan; and, following the Syriac and Arabic Versions, substitutes ‘Samson,’ for ‘Samuel.’ It is not probable, indeed, that Samuel would enumerate himself; and therefore the list of names was originally, perhaps, ‘Jerubbaal, Deborah, and Barak, Jephthah, and Samson.’ This seems confirmed, in some measure, by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, xi. 32, who says, ‘The time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae.’

15. *And it was against your fathers.*—The Septuagint has, ‘against you and against your king;’ which seems to be the true reading. See ver. 25.

17. *I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain.*—Among ourselves, and throughout the whole of the northern temperate zone, thunder and rain are far from being uncommon during harvest. On the contrary, they are more frequent in the hot months of autumn, than at any other time of the year: but, in Palestine, and in the torrid zone, the seasons are more distinctly marked than with us; and, as the rainy season is a period of almost uninterrupted rain, so summer, or harvest, is a period of dry weather, without a shower, and almost without a cloud. This fact being well known to the assembled Israelites, not one among them could expect such an event as that which Samuel predicted. What St. Jerome remarks on Amos iv. 7, ‘And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest,’ merits attention here. The rain, says he, which they call ‘of the latter season,’ is extremely necessary to the fields, and to the thirsty lands of Palestine; for without it, the corn would be dried up before the time of harvest. The period here mentioned, is the spring, at the end of April, when to the corn-harvest is three months, May, June, and July. If this explanation should be insisted on, the thing is absolutely contrary to what happens regularly throughout the East. It is even impossible; for we have never seen it rain in those provinces, and especially in Judea, at the close of the month of June, nor in the month of July: and we read, that Samuel obtained by

his prayers, as something astonishing and prodigious, a rain in summer, during the wheat-harvest; which is usually from midsummer to the end of July. 'Let us admire and adore,' says Scheuzer, 'the good providence of the Supreme Being. If the rain fell at intervals in the hot climates, as it does in the temperate, it would ruin the vegetables, which would never be able to resist the heat of a vertical sun: the same as we sometimes remark in Switzerland, where our vines are burned up, when rain is succeeded by clear weather and a hot sun.'—*Expos. Index to Bible*, p. 87.

The account given by St. Jerome is abundantly confirmed by the testimony of modern travellers, and satisfactorily illustrates the nature of the miracle performed on this occasion by the prophet Samuel.

CHAP. XIII. VER. 1. *Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel.*—The Hebrew text is here evidently mutilated and imperfect. Dr. Geddes renders this verse, 'Saul was — years old when he was made king, and he reigned over Israel — years.' Saul's age, at the time of his being made king, as well as the years of his reign, appear to have been dropped by some means out of the text, and they are not to be found in any of the ancient versions. The Septuagint omits the verse altogether. One Greek reading, derived from the Hexapla of Origen, has 'thirty years' for the former number; and an old scholiast, cited by Bos, has the same. Houbigant adopts this; and Dr. Wall thinks that the number for the second blank probably was 'forty.' Compare Acts xiii. 21; and see Josephus, (*Antiq. lib. vi. ad fin.*) who says that Saul reigned eighteen years during Samuel's life-time, and twenty-two years afterwards.

3. *The garrison.*—This was probably what we should now call, an 'out-post,' or a detachment of their army.

3. *Let the Hebrews hear.*—Houbigant translates the word, which is here rendered 'Hebrews,' and reads, 'Let those beyond the Jordan hear.'

5. *Thirty thousand chariots.*—Here is another mistake with respect to numbers. That one tribe, or clan of barbarians, in the small country of Palestine, should be able to bring into the field a greater number of chariots than the most powerful nations of the east, seems altogether incredible. Besides, it has been justly remarked, that in the accounts of all armies, the cavalry is much more numerous than the chariots of war; which is not the case here. Houbigant and others, following the Syriac and Arabic versions, have substituted, as a much more probable number, 'three thousand chariots.' The error in all probability arose from imagining, that there were two

dots, or ciphers, over the numeral letters, where there was originally none. See note on Numb. i. 46, and Le Clerc's sensible note on this passage. Grotius thinks we should read *שלש אלף*, omitting the two letters *ים*, which reduces the number to three thousand.

6. *And in pits.*]—Rather, in 'the cisterns,' or reservoirs, that were formed for catching and preserving water. So Montanus and others translate the Hebrew expression, *בברות*.

14. *A man after his own heart.*]—David could not be thus characterised on account of his private virtues; but for his public conduct, particularly with respect to religion: for his abhorrence of superstition and idolatry, when surrounded with examples of both, and for his zealous, uninterrupted attachment to the worship of the one true God. The expression also will be farther qualified, by considering it as applied to David, by way of contrast to the fickle character of the wretched, wavering, and disobedient Saul.

15. *And Samuel arose, and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin.*]—The Septuagint has, 'Samuel arose and went away from Gilgal, and the people that were left went up along with the men of war after Saul to Gibeah of Benjamin.' This is probably the true reading. It does not appear that Samuel went to Gibeah; but it was Saul's usual residence. See the next verse. The Hebrew copyist, says Dr. Wall, seems to have missed a line, and added to the sentence concerning Samuel, that which ended the clause respecting Saul. One manuscript, instead of 'Samuel,' at the beginning of the verse, reads 'Saul.'

19. *There was no smith.*]—The same policy we find with respect to the smiths was practised by the Chaldeans, when they destroyed Jerusalem. They carried away all the smiths with them to Babylon, we read, that the people, who remained in the country, might not easily provide themselves with arms. See 2 Kings xxiv. 14.

CHAP. XIV. VER. 2. *Under a pomegranate tree.*]—The original word 'rimmon,' rendered a pomegranate-tree, might possibly be the name of a place. That there were places of this name is evident from Josh. xv. 32; Judg. xx. 45; 1 Chron. iv. 32; Zech. xiv. 10. If we likewise recollect, that the pomegranate-tree is of a low growth, and consequently very improper to have a tent pitched under it, the rendering of the word, as a proper name, will clear the passage from an objection, which might otherwise be urged against it.—Sir T. Brown.

14. *Within as it were an half-acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow.*]—Dr. Kennicott, by a slight alteration of

the text, reads, 'that first slaughter of about twenty men was effected by darts, by slinging stones and flints of the field.' This reconciles the text with the Septuagint Version.—See *Hallet* on the present text, and *Dr. Kennicott's* first Dissertation, p. 452.

15. *The earth quaked: so it was a very great trembling.*—'The whole land was in commotion, as if panic-struck by God.'—*Dr. Geddes.*

18. *Bring hither the ark of God.*—The Septuagint reads, 'bring hither the ephod, for he bore the ephod on that day in the sight of Israel;' which Houbigant and others think is the true reading. Missing his son Jonathan, Saul wished to consult the high-priest; but finding the tumult increasing, he says to him, ver. 20, 'Withdraw thine hand;' i. e. desist for the present from consulting the ephod on this occasion, and immediately hastened to make the best use he could of this wonderful victory.

25. *Honey upon the ground.*—This was wild honey, which is now to be found in great abundance in the deserts of the Holy Land.—See *Dr. Shaw's Travels.*

26. *Put his hand to his mouth.*—That is, 'Took a mouthful.'—

27. *An honeycomb.*—'The wild honey.'

27. *And his eyes were enlightened.*—'And immediately he felt himself refreshed.' Extreme fatigue, we may suppose, had produced faintness, and dimness of sight.

41. *Give a perfect lot.*—Or, 'Give a just decision.'

41. *And Saul and Jonathan were taken.*—That is, lots being cast or drawn, the names of Saul and Jonathan came out.

46. *Went up.*—Rather, 'desisted from,' &c.

CHAP. XV. VER. 4. *In Telaim.*—This word occurs nowhere in Scripture as the name of a place; but as לֵט means a lamb, or kid, the conjecture is extremely probable, that these men were numbered as they count lambs, by suffering them to pass through a narrow place one at a time. The Septuagint mentions Gilgal as the place where they were numbered. So, also, Josephus.

7. *Over-against Egypt.*—Josephus says, that the Amalekites occupied that tract of country, which extends from Pelusium to the Red sea. The wilderness of Shur cannot be said to be 'over-against Egypt,' though it is 'near' it; and in many places where our translation has, 'over-against,' we should now read 'near.' The Hebrew is literally 'in the face, or view of Egypt,' and the Greek has an equivalent expression, ἐπὶ προσώπῳ τῆς Αἰγύπτου.

9. *And the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, &c.*—Here Saul was guilty of two very great faults: 1. Of covetousness,

in preserving for himself the best of all those spoils, which God had expressly commanded to be utterly destroyed. He was the more inexcusable, because the wrath of God had been before executed on the like occasion in an exemplary manner upon Achan, who, at the siege of Jericho, had been guilty of the very same offence, Joshua vii. 20, 21. 2. He was guilty of vanity and ostentation in taking Agag the king of Amalek alive, and bringing him with him in triumph, when God had peremptorily commanded him to destroy them all. This was not an act of mercy and compassion; for he who made no difficulty of destroying even the women and children, without distinction, spared at the same time their wicked king, of whom it is said, by way of eminent cruelty, that his 'sword had made women childless,' ver. 33. He could not spare such a man out of any tenderness and commiseration, but from motives of vanity and ostentation, to triumph over him; or, perhaps, out of too great a readiness to enter into friendship with him; and then his case was the same with that of Ahab afterwards, who being commanded by God to destroy Benhadad, king of Syria, after he had taken him prisoner, called him 'brother,' and made a league with him, 1 Kings xx. 32, 34.—*Dr. Samuel Clarke.*

Commentators are not agreed as to the meaning of the word מַשְׁנֵי, which we translate 'fatlings,' in this verse. See the marginal reading. Bochart is of opinion that it signifies full-grown cattle, or cattle in their prime.

12. *Saul came to Carmel; and, behold, he set him up a place.*—In this place the Septuagint reads χεῖρα, 'hand,' probably because the trophy, or monument of victory, was in the shape of a large hand, the emblem of power, and erected on a pillar. These memorial-pillars were anciently much in use; and the figure of a hand, by its emblematical meaning, was well adapted to preserve the remembrance of a victory. Niebuhr (*Voyage en Arabie*, tom. ii. p. 211. French edit.) speaking of Ali's mosque, at Mesched-Ali, says, that 'at the top of the dome, where one generally sees on the Turkish mosques a crescent, or only a pole, there is here a hand stretched out, to represent that of Ali.' Another writer informs us, that at the Alhambra, or Red palace of the Moorish kings in Grenada, 'on the key-stone of the outward arch of the present principal entrance is sculptured the figure of an arm, the symbol of strength and dominion.' There are, also, some immense forms of the human hand, among the remains of Egyptian sculpture, at the British Museum.

22. *Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice.*—By 'sacrifice' is here meant the external and contingent actions of religion:

by 'obedience' is meant submission to authority. Obedience is inseparable from all virtues, and every sin is disobedience.—*Bp. Taylor.*

We are not to interpret this expression of Samuel's, or any others of a similar nature, which we find in the sacred Scriptures, as if sacrifices under the Mosaic dispensation were things prohibited, and displeasing to God; since they were ordained by him: but they were not to be esteemed as the chief parts of religion. They were but subservient to piety and virtue, for the promoting of which alone they were instituted, and not for any merit or holiness in themselves. If those who offered them made them of such importance, as to neglect the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy, and the love of God, which was the common delusion of the infatuated Jews, God declaimed against them by his prophets, and thrust them from his altar, assuring them, that while their hearts were impure, their sacrifices were an abomination to him.—*Reading.*

23. *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.*—That is, it is as sinful as witchcraft, or divination. 'It is as bad,' says Henry, 'to set up other gods, as to live in a state of disobedience to the true God.' They who are governed by their own corrupt inclinations, in opposition to the commands of God, may be said, in effect, to consult the teraphim, or the diviners. The word תרפים, 'teraphim,' here translated, 'idolatry,' means images of a particular description, and may be used for all kinds of idolatry. The text might have been more literally, and, perhaps, better rendered; 'For the sin of divination is rebellion.'

32. *Agag came unto him delicately.*—Interpreters are not agreed as to the sense of the word, which we translate 'delicately.' The Septuagint has τρεμων, 'trembling;' or 'with alacrity.' (See note on 2 Cor. vii. 15.) Kimchi, and other Rabbis, think that the expression מעדנת should be rendered, 'with the pomp and state of royalty.' Poole says, he came not like an offender expecting the sentence of death, but in his ornaments and dress, as became his quality. Dr. Geddes's version is, 'Agag came to him pleasantly.' Our authorised translation indicates, 'that he approached him with a mincing and effeminate pace.' The radical עד, i. e. 'pleasure,' or 'delight,' favors the supposition, that the wretched monarch came to Samuel cheerfully, and with the hope of being pardoned. Houbigant conjectures, that עד is here used for ענר, and that the meaning is, 'Agag came to him from his chains.'

32. *Surely the bitterness of death is past.*—These words seem to have been uttered by Agag with a full confidence of

having his life spared. He had experienced the clemency of Saul and his soldiers in the field of battle, and little expected to be hewed in pieces by an aged prophet of God in time of peace.—See *Poole* and *Bp. Patrick*.

33. *Samuel hewed Agag in pieces.*—It has been matter of wonder to many, how Samuel could thus slay a captive prince, even in the presence of Saul, who from motives of clemency had spared him: but it must be remembered, that the death of this prince had been predicted above four hundred years ago; that he had been a very bloody tyrant, and therefore was cut off for his own merciless cruelties. Farther, it does not follow, that Samuel slew Agag himself; because what he commanded might be called his own act, though it were done by the public executioner.—*Fawkes*.

Notwithstanding these remarks, it is evident that kings, priests, and prophets, were in those semi-barbarous ages their own executioners. Thus, Gideon slew Zebah and Zalmunna, Judg. viii. 21.—See *Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 230.

CHAP. XVI. VER. 1. *Fill thine horn with oil.*—It is the custom of Iberia, Colchis, and the adjacent country, where the arts are little practised, to keep liquors in horns, and to drink out of them. Probably the eastern horns had chains affixed to them, so that they might occasionally be hung up. If this were the case, it may account for the prophet's supposing that drinking vessels were hung up, Isaiah xxii. 24. *Harmer*, vol. i. p. 382. See note on 1 Kings i. 8.

13. *In the midst of his brethren.*—Dr. Waterland would read, 'secretly from his brethren:' but Houbigant and Dr. Geddes adhere to our present translation. It is said that Eliab would not have treated David as he did, chap. xvii. 28, if he had known that he had been anointed king: but Samuel did not declare for what purpose he anointed him, and they were not likely to guess.—See note on chap. xvii. 12.

14. *But the Spirit of the Lord departed, &c.*—That is, says Bp. Patrick, he grew melancholy, timorous, and suspicious. He started, as the Hebrew word seems to import, where there was no danger. With a mind always full of anxiety and care, he sometimes became furious and distracted, and sometimes, as Abarbanel expresses himself, sighed and trembled, like a man in the dark.

16. *He shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well.*—It is evident to me, says Dr. Mead, (*Medica Sacra*, p. 26,) that king Saul's disease was real insanity, of that kind which consists in dejection of spirits, and which the ancient physicians say is caused by an accumulation of black bile. The English reader

should be told, that our word 'melancholy' is formed of two Greek words, one of which signifies 'black,' and the other 'bile.' The remedy which was applied on this occasion, namely, the music of the harp, was extremely proper; and the old physicians inform us, that they thought music of all kinds of considerable efficacy in banishing from the mind melancholy thoughts. Hence it appears more evidently, that this disease was produced by natural causes; for, otherwise, how could David's playing on the harp remove it? See note on Matt. iv. 24.

17. *And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me.*—This command of Saul originated, perhaps, in a desire to obtain such a person as might, by his skill in playing, equally contribute to his gratification and state. It seems to have formed a part of royal magnificence in the east, to have men of this description about the court. 'Professed story-tellers, it may be observed also, are of early date. Even at this day men of rank have generally one, or more, of these persons among their attendants, who amuse them and their women, when melancholy, vexed, or indisposed; and they are generally employed to lull them to sleep. Many of their tales are highly amusing, especially those of Persian origin, or such as have been written on their model. They were thought so dangerous by Mohammed, that he expressly prohibited them in the Koran.'—*Richardson's Dissert. on the Manners of the East*, p. 69.

20. *And Jesse took an ass laden with bread.*—The words, 'laden with,' are an addition by our translators. The original is, 'an ass bread;' or, 'an ass of bread;' meaning, it is probable, not an animal, but a vessel, containing bread; a stated measure, or a pile. The Septuagint renders it, γομop αpτωv, 'a gomer of bread;' so we find in the Greek poet Sosibius, 'he eat three times, in the space of a single day, three great asses of bread,' αpτωv τpεις οv8ς, which Casaubon (in *Lectio. Theocrit.*) understands of the lading of three asses; whereas it means the contents of three measures of the kind called an ass. This helps to account for the calumny, that the Jews worshipped an ass in their temple; i. e. the pot which contained the manna was that kind of vase called 'an ass.'—*Expos. Index to Bible*, p. 87.

23. *And it came to pass when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand, &c.*—The power of music on the affections is very great. Its effect on Saul was no more than it has produced in many other instances. Timotheus the musician could excite Alexander

the Great to arms, with the Phrygian sound; and allay his fury, or excite him to merriment, with another tone. So Eric, king of Denmark, could be driven, by a certain musician, to such a fury, as to kill some of his best and most trusty servants. — *Ath. Kiroh. Phonurg.* l. ii. s. v. See *Is. Vossius, de Poëmatum cantu, et rhythmī viribus.*

CHAP. XVII. VER. 2. *The valley of Elah.*]—‘After some miles of hard journey over hills and rocks,’ says Dr. E. D. Clarke, ‘we entered the famous Terebinthine vale, renowned for centuries as the field of the victory gained by David over the uncircumcised Philistines. Nothing has occurred to alter the face of the country. The very brook out of which David chose the five smooth stones has been noticed by many a thirsty pilgrim, journeying from Jaffa to Jerusalem, all of whom must pass it in their way. The ruins of goodly edifices, indeed, attest the religious veneration entertained in later periods for the hallowed spot; but even these are now become so insignificant, that they are scarcely discernible; and nothing can be said to interrupt the native dignity of this memorable scene.’

4. *Six cubits and a span.*]—This makes Goliath, according to Bp. Cumberland’s calculation, above eleven feet high. The Vatican copy of the Septuagint has ‘four cubits and a span,’ which reduces it to about eight feet. The former height is not incredible, as there have been persons in later times nearly as tall, and proportionably strong. A man of the name of John Middleton, born at Hale, near Warrington, in Lancashire, in the reign of James the First, was more than nine feet high. Dr. Plott, in his History of Staffordshire, says of him, that ‘his hand, from the carpus to the end of the middle finger, was seventeen inches, his palms eight inches and a half broad, and his whole height nine feet three inches; wanting but six inches of the height of Goliath of Gath.’ There is a picture of this extraordinary man at Brazen-nose College, Oxford, which corresponds with the account given by Dr. Plott.

12. *Now David was the son, &c.*]—All that follows, including this verse, to the end of the thirty-first, is supposed to be an interpolation. It is not in the Vatican copy of the Septuagint, and it certainly interrupts the narrative by introducing a number of circumstances, which seem incongruous, out of place, and in some respects improbable; whereas, if we pass from verse 11 to verse 32, no connection can be more proper. David is represented as being at that time an attendant on the king: and, as we were told just before, that Saul had made him his armour-bearer, we might justly expect to find him with him, when the battle was set in array, ch. xvii. 2. In this connection, David

is also represented as fully answering the character before given of him; 'a mighty valiant man, and a man of war,' xvi. 18, and ready to fight with the giant on the first proposal: for, the account of the Philistine's presenting himself forty days, is in this passage, v. 16, supposed to have been interpolated. The same copy of the Septuagint omits the four concluding verses of this chapter, and also the first five verses of the next.—See *Dr. Kennicott*, vol. ii. p. 419—428. *Pilking-ton's* Remarks, and *Dr. Wall*.

Houbigant, Michaëlis, and Professor Dathe, are also of opinion, that these verses are an interpolation: but, perhaps, the whole may be reconciled by transposing a part of the last chapter (from verse 14 to verse 23), or by considering it, with Bp. Warburton, as an anticipation by the sacred historian.

18. *Take their pledge.*—Dr. Geddes translates this, 'learn their rank;' but Poole more probably interprets it, 'bring me some token of their welfare from them.' So also the Chaldee. Others read, 'bring me word with whom they rank,' or are associated. After all, perhaps, the meaning is simply this, 'bring me their pledge, or token, that I may be assured they have received the things which I send.'—See *Le Clerc*, *Poole's* Synopsis, and *Bp. Patrick*.

22. *David left his carriage.*—By 'carriage' is here meant the provisions which he was carrying to his brethren. These he left with his servant, we may suppose, who acted as a sort of store-keeper.

34. *And there came a lion, and a bear.*—David had to defend his flock from bears as well as lions; and, as Dr. Shaw gives us to understand, these rugged animals are not peculiar to the bleak countries of the north; but are found also in Barbary. Thevenot informs us, that they inhabit the wilderness adjoining the Holy Land, and that he himself saw one near the northern extremities of the Red sea. Part. i. p. 163, 164. See note on Deut. vii. 22.

35. *I caught him by his beard.*—The Septuagint reads, much more probably, *επατησα τε φαρυγγος αυτε*, 'I seized him by the throat.' Neither a lion nor a bear has sufficient beard to seize, or hold fast by.

37. *Out of the paw.*—Rather, 'from the power.' It is in the Hebrew, literally, 'the hand;' which, being the chief instrument of power, is often used in Scripture for power itself.

39. *He assayed to go, for he had not proved it.*—That is, 'He tried to walk in this armour, but could not, because he was inexperienced.'

44. *I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, &c.*—

The conspirators against the emperor Maximinus, having slain him, his son, and several of his best friends, threw out their bodies to be devoured by dogs and the fowls of the air. Πιψαντες τε τα σωματα—ειασαν κυσι τε καὶ ορνισι βοραν.—*Herodian*, lib. viii. § 15. p. 279.

This appears to have been a common threat; and, however shocking, was often carried into effect. Thus Homer, *Il.* i. 4.

——— αὐτῆς δ' ἔλωρια τεύχε κυνεσσιν
Οἰωνοῖσι τε πασι.

Whose limbs unburied on the naked shore,

Devouring dogs and hungry vultures tore.

POPE. See, also, *Il.* xxiii. 21.

49. *And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, &c.*—The dexterity with which the sling may be used, as an offensive weapon, is surprising. It evidently appears, in the conflict between David and Goliath; and may be confirmed by the following citation: 'The arms which the Achæans chiefly used were slings. They were trained to the art from their infancy, by slinging from a great distance at a circular mark of a moderate circumference. By long practice, they took so nice an aim, that they were sure to hit their enemies, not only on the head, but in any part of the face they chose. Their slings were of a different kind from those of the Balearians, whom they far surpassed in dexterity.'—*Polyb.* p. 125.

54. *In his tent.*—That is, in David's tent; which had been erected for him, we may suppose, previously to the encounter.

CHAP. XVIII. VER. 4. *And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe, &c.*—Princes used not only to order caffetans to be given to those whom they intended to honor; but sometimes presented persons with their own garments.

D'Herbelot tells us, that when Sultan Selim, the son of Bajazet, had defeated Cansou Gauri, Sultan of the Mamelukes of Egypt, he assisted at prayers in a mosque at Aleppo, on his triumphant return to Constantinople; and that the Iman of the mosque, having added at the close of the prayer these words, 'may God preserve Selim Khan, the servant and minister of the two sacred cities of Mecca and Medinah!' the title was so very agreeable to the Sultan, that he gave the robe which he had on to this Iman; and, from that time, the Ottoman emperors have always used it in their letters patent as kings of Egypt. Maillet tells us the same story, but differs as to the place, which, according to him, was Damascus; a circumstance of

no consequence as to these remarks.—See *Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 401.

7. *Saul hath slain his thousands, &c.*]—This appears to have been a triumphal song; or at least the chorus of one, somewhat similar to that sung by Moses after his passage through the Red sea. So likewise in Homer, Il. xxii. Achilles, after the death of Hector, proposed his victory over the Trojan chief as the subject for a chorus.

Be this the song, slow-moving toward the shore:

‘Hector is dead, and Ilion is no more.’—POPE.

See note on Exod. xv. 1.

8. *What can he have more but the kingdom?*]—There is not a much more common passion than envy. The wretched Saul already began to view with jealousy the youthful hero, whom he had so lately admired and promoted; who had served to deliver him from his formidable enemies, the Philistines, and whose musical talents had so effectually contributed to relieve the morbid melancholy of his mind.

9. *Eyed David.*]—That is, ‘looked on him with an evil eye.’

10. *Prophesied.*]—Instead of this, we may read, agreeably to the Chaldee paraphrast, who is followed by Houbigant, ‘he was phrensy-struck,’ or seized with a fit of that insanity to which he was subject. This appears to be the right interpretation, and the best apology for his rash attempt on the life of David.

The Vatican copy of the Septuagint omits the 9th, 10th, and 11th verses of this chapter. Also the 17th, 18th, and 19th verses.

10. *And there was a javelin in Saul’s hand.*]—It is not necessary to suppose, with Bp. Patrick, that Saul had provided this weapon on purpose to kill David; for javelins, or spears, as Bp. Wilson remarks, were in those days the ensigns of government, as sceptres are now; and princes generally carried them in their hand. See chap. xix. 9, and xx. 33.

16. *He went out and came in before them.*]—An Hebraism, generally meaning, that he led them out to war, and conducted them with safety back again.

21. *In the one of the twain.*]—This is obscure. Houbigant renders the original, ‘On another condition, thou shalt contract affinity with me’. The first condition was the vanquishing of Goliath; the second is mentioned and gladly accepted—ver. 25, 27.

25. *The king desireth not any dowry; but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.*]—The reason why he exacted the foreskins, was that he might be sure they were only Philistines

whom he killed. Had he demanded the heads only of so many men, David might have cut off those of his own subjects, and brought them instead of the Philistines. But the Philistines being the only neighbouring people, who were not circumcised, on producing their foreskins, there could be no deception. The Arabians, being descended from Ishmael, and all the other nations which sprang from Esau, were circumcised, as well as the Hebrews.—*Calmet*.

27. *Two hundred men.*]—Here the Septuagint reads, ‘one hundred,’ which seems the more probable number, as Saul covenanted for no more.

Since the publication of Pilkington’s Remarks, and Dr. Kennicott’s Dissertations, the Vatican copy of the Septuagint has been generally considered as the authentic translation of this portion of David’s history. The variations from the common Hebrew text consist, for the most part, in the omissions which have been already noticed, in the xvii. and xviii. chapters: and it is remarkable, as Fawkes justly observes, ‘that these omissions and alterations are such, as fully clear the narrative from all manner of inconsistencies, improbabilities, difficulties, and obscurities.’

CHAP. XIX. VER. 5. *He did put his life in his hand.*]—That is, he exposed his life to imminent danger. See note on Judg. xii. 3.

11. *Messengers.*]—Rather ‘officers;’ or ‘agents.’

13. *And Michal took an image.*]—This being in the plural number תרפים, ‘teraphim,’ we may suppose they were those sacred images, which were nearly equivalent to the penates, or household gods, of the Greeks and Romans. The Israelitish women seem to have had a strong propensity to this sort of superstition, notwithstanding the express laws of Moses against it. See Gen. xxxi. 19, and Judges xvii. 5. The learned Selden is of opinion, that *teraph* is the Chaldee pronunciation for *seraph*. The letters *t* and *s* in Greek, and in other languages, we know, are often substituted for each other: and in the Chaldee, the Hebrew ש is generally changed into ט. See *Hyde*, Vet. Pers. Relig. Hist. c. 20, p. 270. If *teraph* may be considered the same as *seraph*; i. e. a species of serpent, it will connect this superstition with that system of serpent-worship, or idolatry, which seems to have overspread the whole heathen world, and from which the Jews themselves were not entirely free. See notes on Gen. iii.

13. *And put a pillow of goat’s hair for his bolster.*]—A kind of net of goats’ hair placed before the teraphim is what is here meant. Such a net, Dr. Shaw says, is ‘a close curtain of gauze,

or fine linen, used all over the east by people of better fashion, to keep out the flies.' (Travels, p. 221, second edit.) That they had such anciently cannot be doubted. Thus, when Judith had beheaded Holofernes in his bed, she pulled down the canopy, or mosquito net, with which he was inclosed, from the pillars, or bed-posts. Judith xiii. 9, 15. So Horace, speaking of the Roman soldiers serving under Cleopatra, queen of Egypt, says,

Interque signa (turpe!) militaria
Sol aspicit *conopeum*.—EPOD. ix. 15.

Amidst the Roman eagles Sol survey'd
(O shame!) th'Egyptian canopy display'd.—FRANCIS.

The reader will observe, that our English term *canopy* comes from the Greek word *κωνωπειον*, which is derived from *κωνωψ*, 'a gnat,' because it was used to keep off those insects.

17. *Why should I kill thee?*]—That is, in our mode of speaking, 'else I will kill thee.' This was only an excuse; for she had dismissed him herself.—Dr. Geddes.

20. *They also prophesied.*]—That is, says Bp. Patrick, 'they praised God in hymns,' which the prophets composed and sang to his honor. See 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 2, 3.

24. *And lay down naked.*]—We are not to suppose that he was literally naked. He had probably thrown off his upper garment, or his regal robe, that he might assimilate himself more to the condition of an ordinary man; or, perhaps, to one of the prophets. This is how R. Solomon and other Rabbis understand the text. The Germans are said by some writers to have appeared naked; but the representation of Tacitus is '*rejectâ veste superiore*;' having thrown off their upper garment. See note on 2 Sam. vi. 20.

CHAP. XX. VER. 5. *To-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat.*]—The Israelites performed solemn sacrifices every new moon; and, after the sacrifices, they feasted together. David being one of the king's family, by marrying his daughter, used to eat with him on those occasions; and he thought that Saul, being inspired of God at Naioth, might possibly have forgotten his anger, and make a favorable inquiry after him.—Bp. Patrick.

19. *The stone Ezel.*]—This is supposed to have been a stone erected for the purpose of shewing travellers their way. The signification of the Hebrew word is 'going,' or 'travelling,' and Montanus's version is '*lapidem viatorium*;' i. e. 'the travellers' stone.'

26. *He is not clean.*]—The Septuagint here reads, 'There

appears to have been some accident; and, being unclean, he has not yet purified himself.' See Levit. xv. 16.

30. *Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman.*]—The Hebrew is בן נעות המרדות; i. e. 'Thou son of perverse rebellion;' or, in plainer language, 'Thou perverse, rebellious son.' There is nothing of 'woman' in the original; and this is how Becke, Purver, and others, render the text.

The reflection on the mother of Jonathan by this passionate monarch is just as gross, at the close of his speech, as our translation represents it to be at the beginning of it. 'Thou hast chosen the son of Jesse, to thine own confusion, and to the confusion of thy mother's nakedness.' It should be remembered, that Saul was subject to a disease, which weakened his mental powers; of which we need no stronger proof than that before us, of his calling names. Mungo Park gives an instance of the prevalence of the same principles in Africa; and if we suppose king Saul, unable to vilify Jonathan to his own satisfaction by personal reproaches, had outstepped the ordinary abuse of his day, and proceeded to that which was designed to produce uncustomary vexation, we do little injury to his character, or that of his general deportment. Maternal affection, he observes, is every where conspicuous among the Africans, and creates a correspondent return of tenderness in the child. 'Strike me,' said my attendant, 'but do not curse my mother.' I found the same sentiment to prevail universally, and observed in all parts of Africa, that the greatest affront, which could be offered to a negro, was to reflect on her who gave him birth.—Travels in Africa, p. 264; Expos. Index to Bible, p. 89.

30. *And unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness.*]—Rather, 'and to thy mother's shame.' So, in effect, Coverdale, Matthew, Cranmer, and Purver.

34. *For he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.*]—Our translation is here a little confused. There are two reasons assigned, says Bp. Patrick, for Jonathan's fasting. The first was his distress on account of his friend David, and the second was his indignation at his father's treatment, who had used very harsh language to him, on account of David, and thrown a javelin at him. The copulative 'and' is here wanting, as in many other places. By supplying it, the text will be, 'For he was grieved on account of David, and also because his father had done him (Jonathan) shame.'

40. *His artillery.*]—Rather, 'his weapons;' or, 'his bow and arrows.'

41. *Toward the south.*]—Instead of this, Dr. Geddes trans-

lates it, 'from behind the stone.' It may be, as Bp. Patrick conjectures, on the south side of the stone Ezel.

CHAP. XXI. VER. 3. *What is under thine hand?*]—That is, 'What is there in thy power to supply me with?'

5. *The vessels of the young men are holy.*]—Some commentators are of opinion, that by the 'vessels of the young men' are meant the persons of young men themselves; and they refer to the equivalent word *σκευος*, 'a vessel,' 1 Thess. iv. 4. But the use of the same word, in a different sense, at the end of the verse, is rather an objection to this interpretation. Houbigant's version is, 'the vessels of the young men are holy;' that is, 'they have been purified according to the ritual forms; but if any uncleanness has happened to them during the journey, their vessels have been purified this very day.' Dr. Geddes renders it, 'the young men were then clean: if on this journey any profanation have befallen them, they shall be purified.'

7. *Detained before the Lord.*]—That is, for the purpose of performing some vow; or of making some expiation and atonement.

13. *And he changed his behaviour before them, &c.*]—David is not the only instance of this kind. Bashasus, the Arabian, surnamed Naama, had several of his brethren killed, whose death he earnestly wished to revenge. In order to accomplish this object, he feigned himself mad, till at length he found an opportunity of executing his intended revenge, by killing all who had a share in the murder of his brethren. (Anthol. Vet. Hamasa, p. 535. edit. Schultens.) Among the Greeks, Ulysses is said to have counterfeited madness, to prevent his going to the Trojan war. Solon, also, the great Athenian law-giver, practised the same deceit. By appearing in the dress, and with the air of a madman, and singing a song to the Athenians, he carried his point, and got the law repealed that prohibited, under the penalty of death, any application to the people for the recovery of Salamis.—*Plut. Vit. Solon.* p. 82. The assumed madness of Brutus, in the time of the Tarquins, is known to every sciolist in history.

13. *And feigned himself mad in their hands.*]—This action of David's proceeded from want of faith in God's promises and providence; as such, it is not to be imitated by Christians, who are not to do any thing unbecoming their profession, even to avoid the greatest dangers.—See *Bp. Wilson*.

CHAP. XXII. VER. 16. *Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech; thou and all thy father's house.*]—The prophecies mentioned chap. ii. 31, and chap. iii. 11. against Eli and his house, for

the great crimes which his sons had been guilty of, and for which he too gently reprov'd them, were now partly fulfilled. Although this massacre was most unjust, and abominably cruel in Saul, yet it was a most righteous act in God to punish the house of Eli, as he had before pronounced sentence on him, for suffering him to be dishonored. It was on this occasion that the fifty-second Psalm was composed.—*Bp. Wilson.*

18. *Fourscore and five persons.*]—Here, also, there is a considerable difference with respect to the numbers. The Septuagint has ‘three hundred and five;’ and in one edition of Josephus, the number is ‘three hundred and thirty-five.’ But the Hebrew text seems the most probable, because it contains the smallest number. See note on Num. i. 46.

CHAP. XXIII. VER. 14. *The wilderness of Ziph.*]—We find a city of this name mentioned Josh. xv. 55, together with Carmel and Maon; and therefore it probably was near them; accordingly, in the history of David, we have mention made of Carmel and Maon, as adjoining to Ziph. So that it is not to be doubted, but by the Ziph, in the wilderness of which David now lay, and where was the hill of Hachilah, is to be understood Ziph, near Carmel and Maon. This is placed by Jerome eight miles eastward from Hebron.—*Dr. Wells.*

CHAP. XXV. VER. 15. *As long as we were conversant with them.*]—That is, while we associated, or had any intercourse with them.

18. *And two bottles of wine.*]—Rather, ‘two skins of wine.’ See note on Josh. ix. 4.

22. *Any that pisseth against the wall.*]—This homely expression has relation to the peculiar habit, or characteristic distinction of a dog, as different from any other animal. The dog appears not to have been a domestic animal in those early days, and was considered as an unclean, disgusting creature, and almost useless. If we paraphrase the threat in this text, and in a few others, we may say that David’s intention was to destroy both man and beast, not sparing the life even of such a worthless creature as a dog. See, however, Odyss. x. 215. Dr. Geddes’s translation is, ‘God do so and so, nay more than that, to David: if, by to-morrow’s dawn, I have left of all that belong to him even a single dog.’ This expression, however, sometimes appears to be metaphorically applied to denote the lowest order of human beings. See 1 Kings xvi. 11; and note on Job xxx. 1.

25. *Nabal is his name, and folly is with him.*]—Want of charity is generally a want of true sense, as well as of religion and virtue. It is an argument of want of sense, because no

part of a rich man's fortune is so advantageously employed as that which is laid out in charity. The meaner sort of people are a wall and a guard about the wealthier; and the tenderness of the rich to the poor is an obligation, not only on those that want, but on those that are most liable to do so, on all that are related to them either in fortune or nature: so that the service and affection of our neighbours, as well as our own honor and security, are never so certain and cheaply purchased as by our charity. That uncharitableness is next an argument of the want of all true religion and virtue, is plainer yet; for the covetous and uncharitable have, like Nabal, neither honor nor gratitude, neither faith in God, nor kindness for man; no zeal for public good, nor compassion for private misery. All their aims, all their kindness, all their passions, centre in themselves; so that we are not to wonder if this sort of sinners are condemned by men and abhorred by God.—*Dr. Lucas.* See the marginal reading.

27. *This blessing.*]—i. e. 'This gift.' Comp. the marginal reading of ch. xxx. 26; and see 2 Kings, v. 15.

29. *The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life.*]—The metaphors in this verse are derived from the consideration, that things of value are collected together, and often tied up in bundles, like sheaves of corn, to prevent their being scattered and lost; and that whatever is put into a sling is not intended to be preserved, but to be thrown away. Calmet proposes a slight alteration of the text, and would read: 'but the soul of my lord shall be like a living stone with the Lord.' Houbigant translates as we do, and gives the same interpretation.

32. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me.*]—David overlooks the rich and seasonable present of Abigail, though pressed with hunger and wearied with travel; but her advice, which disarmed his rage, and calmed his revenge, draws forth these high and affectionate gratulations from him. These were his joyful and glorious trophies; not that he triumphed over his enemy, but that he insulted over his revenge; that he escaped from himself, and was delivered from his own fury.—*Dr. South.*

44. *But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish.*]—The particle 'vau,' which we render 'but,' at the beginning of the verse, should have been translated 'for;' this being the cause why David took another wife. The reason why Saul put this indignity on David, was to extinguish, as far as it was in his power, all relationship and kindred, and to cut off his hopes and pretensions to the

crown on that account. The Jewish Rabbis tell us, that this Phalti was a very pious man, and knew not Michal, because she was another man's wife; for this reason David, who had never divorced her, received her again, after he became king of Israel. See 2 Sam. iii. 15, 16; and *Bp. Patrick*.

CHAP. XXVI. VER. 5. *And Saul lay in the trench.*—One can hardly imagine that the Hebrew word *לַמַּעַן* signifies a ditch and bank thrown up, as one would suppose our translators apprehended, from their using the word 'trench;' for it appears from the story, that they took no precautions against David. Nor does it seem to mean a 'ring of carriages,' as it is supposed in the margin, and as Buxtorf interprets the word; for most probably it was impracticable for carriages to pass in that mountainous country. It seems simply then to mean the 'round,' or 'circle,' which these troops formed, and in the midst of which, as in the place of honor, Saul slept.

The view which d'Arvieux gives of a modern Arab camp agrees perfectly well with this account of Saul, only supposing, that, for the sake of expedition, they carried no tents with them; for he tells us an Arab camp is always 'round,' when the disposition of the ground will permit, the prince being in the middle, and the Arabs about him, but so as to leave a respectful distance between them. Add to this, that their lances are fixed near them in the ground all the day long, ready for action.

When David is represented as sometimes secreting himself in the night, when he was with his armies, instead of lodging with the people, 2 Sam. xvii. 8, 9, it is to be supposed to refer to his not sleeping in the middle of the camp, which was the proper place for a king, the better to avoid any surprise from enemies.

It appears to have been the custom for warriors in ancient times, when they lay down to rest, to have their arms ranged in order near them. The description of Diomed sleeping, in Homer, is very similar to this:

A wood of spears stood by, that, fix'd upright,
Shot from their flashing points a quiv'ring light.

So, also, Rhesus is represented:

Through the brown shade the fulgid weapons shone:
Amidst lay Rhesus, stretch'd in sleep profound.—POPE.

20. *As when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.*—

The particle 'or' is wanting before 'as.' Bochart and Le Clerc are of opinion, that the word which we translate 'partridge,' means a species of snipe, or woodcock, unknown to us. The original word, נָקָר, occurs only here, and Jer. xvii. 11, where this bird is described as 'sitting on eggs, and hatching them not;' or, according to the marginal reading, as 'gathering young, which she hath not brought forth.' This peculiarity will by no means apply to our partridge, or to the snipe and woodcock, which are not found in warm climates: but it characterises the Bartavella, or Greek partridge. It is said that this bird ordinarily keeps among rocks, but descends into the plain to lay its eggs; that, like our common hen, when its own eggs happen to be destroyed, it will sit on and hatch the eggs of other birds; and consequently will call and gather the young ones round her, as a hen would young ducklings.

The Septuagint has a singular variation in this verse. It is, 'the king of Israel is come out to seek my life, as the night-crow, or the owl, (νυκτινοραξ) pursues his prey on the mountains.' The Hebrew word for a partridge means 'to call:' and, as this bird is remarkable for calling her young ones together in the evening, from this circumstance, probably, it derived its name.

23. *The Lord render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness.*—Rather, 'the Lord render to every man according to his righteousness and his faithfulness!'

CHAP. XXVII. VER. 8. *David—invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, &c.*—This action has been condemned by some as an act of ingratitude, and as a breach of the laws of hospitality; but as the charge rests on a supposition, that the nations invaded were Philistines, and the confederates of Achish, it will be found to be groundless, if we consider what has been offered on this subject by an able advocate for revelation. 'It may be observed,' says Dr. Chandler, 'that these clans were not confederates with Achish, but in a state of hostility with him; particularly the Amalekites, who, we find, soon after, made great depredations on the Philistine territories, chap. xxx. 16; David, therefore, in attacking them, did not act dishonorably by Achish, but in reality for his service. Besides, the Amalekites, many ages before, had been doomed to destruction; and the Geshurites and Gezrites, the old inhabitants of the land, and Canaanites (as appears from Josh. xii. 5. xvi. 3.) were commanded to be extirpated, by God himself, for such reasons as rendered such a command worthy of his character. It is farther to be remarked, that as those people were on the south of

Judah, they made frequent incursions into the land, and were the avowed enemies of the Hebrews. This is certain, at least, of the Amalekites, of whom frequent mention is made in the books of the Old Testament, as engaged in many expeditions to plunder the country and destroy the inhabitants. David, therefore, had a right to cut off these nations; and, in doing it, he served his country without injuring his protector and friend.'

10. *Against the south of Judah.*]—David here meant the Geshurites and the Gezrites. Both of these people were Canaanites, and occupied that part of the country, which lies to the south of Judah. But Achish, as was intended, understood him in a very different sense, and believed that he had attacked his own countrymen. See ver. 12. David's answer, therefore, though not an absolute falshood, was certainly an equivocation made with intention to deceive, and therefore not compatible with that sense of truth and honor, which became him as a prince, and a professor of true religion. From these and similar passages, we may observe the strict impartiality of the Sacred Scriptures. They present us with the most faithful delineation of human nature, in an early age of the world; they exhibit the frailties and infirmities of kings, of priests, and prophets, with equal truth; and examples of vice and frailty, as well as of piety and virtue, are held up 'for instruction in righteousness,' that we might guard against those errors, to which the best men are exposed, and which we cannot avoid without the greatest vigilance and care.

CHAP. XXVIII. VER. 2. *Keeper of mine head.*]—Rather, 'of my life.' The Septuagint has, *Αρχισωματοφυλακα θησομαι σε*, i. e. 'I will appoint thee captain of my life-guards.'

6. *The Lord answered him not.*]—It should be recollected, as one of the most barbarous actions of Saul's reign, that he had ordered the priests to be massacred; that the Urim was with Abiathar, who had attached himself to David; that it was now among the Philistines; and that Samuel was dead. In this verse, the three usual modes of 'inquiring of the Lord' are noticed. The first, Spencer has shewn, originated with the Egyptians, (see Dissert. de Urim et Thum. p. 983) the others were common to all heathen nations. Thus, in Homer, (Il. i. v. 62.) when the Greeks were suffering under the vengeance inflicted on them by Apollo, Achilles says,

But let some *prophet*, or some sacred sage,
Explore the cause of great Apollo's rage;

Or learn the wasteful vengeance to remove,
By mystic *dreams*; for dreams descend from Jove.

POPE.

7. *Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit.*]—Many learned critics have given their sentiments on the nature of this appearance to Saul. There are some who are of opinion, that witches could cause the devil to counterfeit the souls of the dead, and that in this instance an evil spirit appeared before Saul in the likeness of Samuel. The ancient fathers universally ascribed to magicians and necromancers the power of actually calling up the souls of the dead. Again, many learned men have maintained, that it was neither Samuel, nor an evil spirit, which now appeared to Saul; but that the whole was the work of human imposture. But there is an opinion concerning this matter different from the foregoing, which is this, that the appearance of Samuel to Saul was a divine miracle, though it is not necessary to determine whether the miracle consisted in raising Samuel, or in presenting an image or representation of him before Saul. It seems to have been the opinion of the ancient Jews that Samuel now appeared to Saul. And if this was the real case, the apparition must be ascribed, not to the power of enchantment, but to the immediate appointment of God, as a rebuke and punishment of Saul. The behaviour of Samuel agrees well with the supposition of there being, pursuant to a divine command, either a real appearance, or some miraculous representation of this prophet of God; accordingly, Saul's answer is manifestly an apology for his inquiring what to do, in a way so expressly forbidden by God, and shews that he understood the prophet as reproving him. Samuel, in his reply, first exposes the absurdity of Saul's conduct in applying to him, when he found himself abandoned by God; he then explains to him the true grounds of his desertion, and of the present distressed situation of his affairs; and, lastly, he denounces further judgments against him, as a punishment of the guilt, which he was at that very time contracting, (for the author of the books of Chronicles assigns this new crime of consulting the witch as the particular ground of his death, though not exclusively of his former disobedience, 1 Chron. x. 13.) Is this the language of an artful impostor, whose business it was to flatter and delude the king, to soothe his distress, to gain his favor, and thus to procure from him a larger gratuity? Or if from a regard to the credit of her art she did not choose to raise his hopes, why did she strive to provoke his resentment by the

freedom of her reproofs, and the denunciation of the most dreadful judgments? There is a keenness and asperity in this answer absolutely inconsistent with the least regard to her own interest, or safety, and not to be accounted for on the supposition of its proceeding from a person of art and address, under the circumstances of this sorceress. Indeed the very soul of Samuel seems to breathe in his expressions of displeasure against the disobedience and wickedness of Saul. But here it may be asked, 'Is it likely, that God should refuse to answer Saul, when he consulted him in ways appointed by himself, and yet should answer him in a forbidden way, and thus encourage necromantic divinations, when he had expressly ordered those who had practised them to be punished with death?'

Saul, having been rejected by God for his stubborn disobedience to the divine orders, had no right to ask, or expect his direction and preservation in his present danger; nor could God have granted it, consistently with the design of preparing the way for the advancement of David to the throne of Israel. For this reason, God did not answer him in the ways of his appointment; nor did he afterwards answer him in a forbidden way: but, if the explication here given of this history be just, he interposed previously to the use of magic rites, and on purpose to reprove Saul for having recourse to them, and to pronounce upon him the sentence of death for this very crime, at the instant he was committing it; by which he testified his divine displeasure against it. How this could encourage the use of necromancy, or indeed how God could more effectually discourage that most detestable art, I am not able to conceive.

The method of God's proceeding on this occasion seems very conformable to what he had been pleased to do before, in other cases of a like nature. When the king of Moab had recourse to sorceries, God himself interposed, and so over-ruled the mind of Balaam, that he was compelled to bless those whom Balak wanted him to curse. Numb. xxiii. 8—11. And when king Ahaziah sent to consult Baal-zebub about his recovery, God by his prophet Elijah stopt his messengers, reproved their master, and denounced his death, 2 Kings i. 2—4. And why might not God in like manner interpose in the case of Saul, in order to disappoint his hopes of divine protection, and to denounce his doom; the foreknowledge of which had so great an effect on him, that he instantly fell down in a swoon, and could no longer bear up against the bitter agonies of his mind? What is there in this conduct inconsistent with the justice, or sanctity, of the great Governor of the world? Could Saul complain of being sentenced to die for having recourse to those im-

pious arts, the exercise of which he himself had heretofore punished with death? How proper was it, that his death should appear to be the punishment of his guilt! His death, if it had not been foretold, would have been considered as a common event, rather than as the execution of the divine displeasure.

He had certainly disregarded the threatenings of God to depose him, and to appoint David in his stead; and very probably he had taken occasion, from his suspending their execution, to turn them into ridicule. Finding that he continued in the full possession of his kingdom many years after Samuel had foretold it should be taken from him, he might ascribe the prediction to the disaffection and enmity of the prophet, and his attachment to David. To clear the character of Samuel from all suspicion, and to vindicate the credit of his predictions; to evidence the divine designation of David to the throne of Israel; and, in the most affecting manner, to display the righteous vengeance of God against the practice of necromantic divinations, by which Saul had now filled up the measure of his guilt, seems to have been the design of God in this miraculous appearance of his prophet.—*Farmer on Miracles.*

Many judicious critics and sound divines, taking it for granted, that there was a real appearance of Samuel in this night-scene, have adopted, in substance, the same sentiments as Dr. Farmer; but see notes on ver. 8 and 14.

7. *That I may go to her, and enquire of her.*—Thus ‘God sends men strong delusions, that they may believe a lie.’ 2 Thess. ii. 11.—*Bp. Wilson.*

7. *En-dor.*—This was a city belonging to the half-tribe of Manasseh, situated on the west of the Jordan. Eusebius and Jerome tell us, that, in their days, there was a large town of the same name, about five miles to the south of mount Tabor. This might be the En-dor here spoken of.

8. *And he went, &c.*—Saul had been greatly harassed before he took this foolish and desperate step. He must have outraged the feelings of his people by the massacre of the priests, and the destruction of their city. David, the object of his envy, had formed a powerful faction against him, and was now united with his enemies. He was terrified at the numerous host of the Philistines, and ‘his heart,’ we read, ‘greatly trembled.’ Samuel, his faithful adviser, who first anointed him king, was dead; and he could obtain no answer from the Lord to direct his conduct, or to appease his terrors. In this state of mind, the wretched king goes to what our translators call, agreeably to the language and superstition which prevailed in their time, a woman who had a familiar spirit, the witch of En-dor; but

whom the Greek translators call *γυναικα εβγασπιμυθον*, 'a woman who was a ventriloquist,' and whom we should now call a pretended fortune-teller, a juggler, an impostor, or a cheat.

Let us now attend to the circumstances under which Saul went to her. Having enforced the law against these people, or at least having driven most of them out of the country, he could not, without the greatest inconsistency and disgrace, encourage their illegal calling by his own example. He therefore put off his regal dress, we may suppose, and, having 'disguised himself, and put on other raiment,' he went to her, 'by night,' with only two attendants. He was certainly desirous that his subjects should not know of this secret expedition; but there was no powerful motive for his concealing himself from the woman; and if there had been, it is not probable that he would have succeeded. The persons of kings are generally well known; but in so small a country as Judea, where warfare seems to have been perpetual, and where it was the custom for sovereigns to shew themselves, on all occasions, at the head of their armies, it is scarcely possible that Saul should not have been recognised by this woman. Besides, it should be recollected, that he was no common man; for we read, 'from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people.' (ch. ix. 2.) This was a circumstance, therefore, which must have been generally talked of, and could not be concealed: but it answered the impostor's purpose to pretend not to know that it was Saul. Otherwise, when she affected ignorance, how could she suppose, that any one but the king himself could swear unto her by the Lord, 'that no punishment should happen to her?' However, if she had any doubt before, when he required her to bring up Samuel, she must then have been convinced.

This crafty juggler, or female necromancer, must have been a person of some talents and ingenuity, otherwise she could not have successfully practised her art and mystery. Having therefore imposed on the miserable, atrabilious king, so far as to persuade him, that she had raised up the spirit of Samuel, she of course would exert her utmost efforts to make the venerable prophet speak in character, and address Saul in that strain of severity and rebuke, which he had been accustomed to hear from him. The cause of dissension between them must have been notorious throughout the country, and on this subject chiefly she addresses him; for, as to her prediction, she foretold no more than what was extremely probable would happen, from the number and fierceness of the enemy, the distracted state of Saul's kingdom, and the extreme distress and imbecillity of his own mind. She said, 'To-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with

me:’ but all of them were not slain; for we find, 2 Sam. ii. 9, Ishbosheth, Saul’s son, was ‘made king over Gilead.’ May we not suppose, also, that this wicked impostor would feel pleasure in mortifying and destroying this wretched monarch, who had persecuted her tribe? But having gratified her revenge, she could not help shewing some compassion for the sufferings of her degraded sovereign. When, therefore, she saw him fall prostrate on the ground, totally deprived of strength, ver. 20, she was desirous of restoring him to sanity and health by those hospitable attentions, which, we afterwards read, she bestowed on him and his attendants, ver. 22—25. See the two following notes.

13. *I saw gods ascending out of the earth.*]—The word here used is the general and indefinite term, אֱלֹהִים, ‘Elohim;’ which might have been rendered, ‘a venerable person, a chieftain, or a judge.’ That it should have been in the singular number is evident from the question in the next verse, ‘What form is *he* of?’ Or, according to the marginal reading, ‘What is *his* form?’

14. *And Saul perceived.*]—This translation is calculated to mislead the English reader; because he may suppose, that this wretched king derived his conviction from ocular demonstration; but it is evident, from the nature of his inquiries, that he had seen nothing: yet when the woman told him that it was an old man, and that he was covered with a mantle, such an one probably as Samuel had been accustomed to wear, he had an idea that it was Samuel, the person whom he wished to consult. The verb יָדַע always means to perceive mentally, and in Hiphil it signifies to teach, inform, or cause another to know. In the Greek it is εἶπεν, ‘he knew,’ or ‘understood;’ and in English, it should have been rendered, ‘And Saul understood,’ or ‘had an idea,’ (i. e. from her description) ‘that it was Samuel.’ In the whole of this transaction, we must not forget the evil spirit of melancholy, which haunted the wretched Saul, and subjected him to occasional fits of insanity.

The following sensible remarks are supplied by the author of ‘The Companion to the Holy Bible.’ ‘The woman describes Samuel according to his public character and station. And Saul knew from this description, that it was the true Samuel; yet he had not seen this spectre, nor had its features been described to him; nor had it risen out of the earth, beyond head and shoulders; and those were muffled closely in a mantle.’

‘It appears clearly, that Saul was at some distance from the scene of this incantation; that he knew nothing but through

the medium of the woman; and the woman cried with a 'loud voice,' ver. 12, as well from the effect of her distance from Saul, as to make the greater impression on him.'

'There is nothing in this procedure beyond the reach of very moderate art. To have described Samuel otherwise than he is described, would have been folly; to have introduced him to Saul personally, might have been more convincing, but no such thing takes place. Directly as Saul is persuaded that it is Samuel, 'he stooped his face to the ground, and bowed himself.' So that he did not attempt to see any personage, but prostrated himself on the ground; and along this ground came the voice to him, which maintained the conversation with him, 'muttering out of the dust.' Upon the whole, I do not see the necessity even of ventriloquism in this history. The time of night implies all the conveniences of darkness; the distance of Saul from the actual scene of incantation; the imperfect description of the person of Samuel; the passing of the voice along the ground; all these circumstances afford so many means of deception, that I think ventriloquism may be dispensed with.' See note on Deut. xviii. 11. and Michaelis, in Comment. Art. 254.

CHAP. XXXI. VER. 3. *The archers hit him.*]—The Septuagint reads, 'The archers and spearmen discover Saul,' (which they might have done from his superior height) 'and he was wounded in the hypochondria, or belly.' Had he not been desperately wounded, he might have still fought, or saved himself by flight. Sir Isaac Newton is of opinion, that a prodigious number of men united with the Philistines against Saul, in the beginning of his reign, and that they were the shepherds, who had been expelled from Egypt by Amasis; some of whom, we read, fled into Phoenicia, and others into Arabia Petræa.

10. *They fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.*]—It is probable that they hung his dead body on the hooks, which Dr. Shaw and other travellers inform us were driven into the walls of towns, for the purpose of hanging criminals on. Josephus says, that it was fastened to a cross near the city walls of Beth-shan. His sons, it is certain, were treated in the same ignominious manner. See ver. 12.

12. *And burned them there.*]—Commentators have expressed some difficulty with respect to the interpretation of these words. It was the custom of the Jews to embalm, not to burn, their dead; and in the parallel texts there is no mention of their having done any thing but buried their bones, or bodies, except that of Amos vi. 10, might be thought to imply more, which, however, relates to a period subsequent to this, by about two hundred and seventy years. The Chaldee paraphrast says,

that they burnt a light or lamp over them at Jabesh, such as they were accustomed to burn over the bodies of kings. Whether this be the right interpretation or not, there is no inconsistency between this verse and the following; because the flesh, muscles, &c. might have been burnt, and the bones still left for burial.

19. *And they took their bones.*—It appears that the word ‘bones’ frequently means, by an allowable synecdoche, the same thing with ‘corpse.’ Thus, the embalmed body of Joseph is called ‘his bones,’ Gen. ch. i. ver. 25, 26; and Exod. xiii. 19. So the lying prophet terms his body, just become breathless, ‘his bones:’ ‘When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones,’ 1 Kings xiii. 31. Josephus, also, tells us that Simon removed ‘the bones’ of his brother Jonathan, the high priest, who was slain by Tryphon, when he was departing out of that country; though Simon seems to have removed the body as soon as might be after Tryphon’s retirement. The same form of expression, by which ‘bones’ are taken for the whole body, is not uncommon in modern writers. Thus Cardinal Wolsey, in Shakspeare, says,

‘O father Abbot,
An old man, broken with the storms of state,
Is come to lay his weary bones among ye.’

II. SAMUEL.

INTRODUCTION.

If we assent to the opinion of the Talmudists, that Samuel did not continue this history beyond the twenty-fourth chapter of the First Book, we may assign this Second, as well as the latter part of the former, to the prophets Gad and Nathan. Many learned Jews have contended, from a fanciful resemblance of the style to the works of Jeremiah, that he compiled both the First and Second Books of Samuel from such memoirs as Samuel, Gad, and Nathan left behind them.

We may conclude, then, either that they were written entirely by Samuel, or partly by him, and finished by some of those inspired persons, who issued from the schools of the prophets, which he is supposed to have established. These were colleges for the instruction of select youths in the knowledge of the law, and in the exercises of devotion. Upon many of these disciples God conferred the spirit of prophecy; and probably most of the subsequent prophets were elected from these schools. They were under the direction of a prophet really inspired, who was considered as a Father to the society; and Samuel was probably the first who possessed that dignified character. This Second Book of Samuel bears an exact resemblance to the preceding history, and is likewise connected with that which succeeds. We see, throughout, the effects of that enmity against other nations, which had been im-

planted in the minds of the Israelites by the Mosaic law, and which gradually tended to the extirpation of idolatry.

The history of this book contains a period of nearly forty years, from about A. M. 2948 to 2988. It describes the establishment and prosperity of David's reign; which he deserved, as well by his generous respect for the memory of Saul, as by the excellency of many other good qualities, which his maturer piety displayed. It relates the extinction of Saul's family, and David's grateful and unsuspecting kindness to the surviving son of Jonathan. The inspired author then records the fall of David; and exhibits a melancholy proof of the unconscious depravity, to which the noblest minds may be seduced by passion. He represents to us God's anger softened, but not appeased, by David's repentance, who was soon after punished by the death of the child, and by many other domestic calamities. The transgression of Amnon was the first consequence of his bad example; and 'evil rose up against him out of his own house,' in the ambitious intrigues and rebellion of Absalom. We soon behold him a degraded and fugitive sovereign, reviled by his meanest subjects; and severely punished for his conduct towards Uriah, by the incestuous outrage of his son. The submissive repentance however of David procured his pardon and re-establishment on his throne; which he dignified by the display of the greatest moderation, justice, and piety. If, in the exultation of his recovered prosperity, God suffered him to be betrayed into an ostentatious numbering of the people, 'his heart smote him' with immediate repentance, and having thrown himself on God's mercy, he intreated that he alone might suffer from the indignation which he had provoked.

The author, in the concise style of sacred history, selects only the most important incidents of those revolutions which he records; and, among the conspicuous beauties of the book, we can never sufficiently admire David's feeling lamentation

over Saul and Jonathan; the expressive parable of Nathan; and the triumphant hymn of thanksgiving and praise in chapter xxii.

The Books of Samuel connect the chain of sacred history by detailing the circumstances of a most interesting and important period. They describe the reformation and improvements of the Hebrew church established by David; and, as they delineate minutely the life of that monarch, they point out his typical relation to Christ; and likewise illustrate, in a remarkable manner, those inspired productions, which are contained in the Book of Psalms. Many heathen authors have borrowed from the Books of Samuel, or have collected from other sources, many particulars of those accounts which are here recorded. This remark will equally apply to the Books of Kings; and, indeed, to all the books of sacred history.

For further information, see *Carpzovius's* Introduction to the canonical books of the Old Testament, and *Dr. Gray's* Key; from which, for the most part, these Introductions to the respective books of the Holy Bible are selected and abridged.

CHAPTER I.

VER. 9. *For anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me.*—*Dr. Geddes*, by a slight conjectural emendation, consisting in the change of a single letter, translates it, 'For I am already so convulsed, that life hardly remaineth in me.'—See the marginal reading. Our present translation would be intelligible and consistent, if we read 'though,' instead of 'because;' and this interpretation of the particle כִּי is perfectly justifiable. See *Noldius*; or *Dr. Taylor's* Heb. Concord.

The story of this Amalekite appears to have been all a fiction, formed for the purpose of ingratiating himself with David, as the next probable successor to the crown. See chap. iv. 10. There are always men of this character about camps, whose object is plunder, and for which they will even strip the dead. It is a little remarkable, that this stroller should have been beforehand with the Philistines in stripping the body of the slain monarch; and it deserves notice that Saul, who had forfeited his crown, in the estimation of the stern, but venerable prophet, on account of his disobedience and ill-timed clemency, with respect to the Amalekites, should now have the insignia of royalty stripped from his person by one of these very people.

10. *And the bracelet that was on his arm.*—It is possible that this bracelet might not have been any part of the regalia of the kingdom of Israel; but merely an article of value, which Saul had about him, and which the stranger thought fit to present with the crown to David. Yet it seems rather to be mentioned as a royal ornament; and it is certain, that it has been since used in the east as a badge of power. For when the khalif, Cayem Bemrillah, granted the investiture of certain dominions to an eastern prince, which his predecessors had possessed, and, among the rest, of the city of Bagdat itself, it is said that this ceremony of investiture was performed by the khalif's sending him letters patent, a crown, a chain, and bracelets.

It does not appear, however, that any of the commentators have taken Saul's bracelet in this light. All the observation that Grotius makes on it is, that it was an ornament used by the men as well as the women of those nations.—See *Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 454.

14. *How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?*—Saul, having no power over his own life, could not, in justice, give another power to take it away. The Amalekite therefore suffered justly, admitting his story to be true; for he ought to have used all possible means to save the unfortunate monarch's life.—See *Bp. Wilson*.

18. *He bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow.*—We do not read of archers in the armies of the Philistines till in their last engagement with the Israelites. As it is probable, that Saul and Jonathan, David's favorite, were both mortally wounded by the shot of an arrow, and as the Philistines owed their success, perhaps, to this new kind of

military weapon, David was very desirous of teaching the children of Israel the use of the bow, that he might be the better able to encounter those formidable enemies in future.

Though this interpretation will sufficiently justify our present translation, many commentators are of opinion, that 'The Bow' was the title of the following beautiful elegiac ode, so called from 'The bow of Jonathan,' mentioned verse 22. By teaching the children of Judah 'The Bow,' (for the words, 'the use of,' are supplied by our translators) is meant, not only the words of this exquisite dirge, but the tune, perhaps, or musical modulation, which David used when he sang it. The Septuagint certainly favors this interpretation; for it reads, 'and David sang this mournful song, and told them to teach it the children of Judah.' The book of Jasher here mentioned seems to have been a collection of divine odes, or songs, written to commemorate some remarkable events; its title also having reference to 'the just men,' who were employed in bringing them to pass. The circumstance of the sun's standing still, Josh. x. 13, we find was recorded in this book; also, the short song, perhaps, beginning with 'Spring up, O well!' Numb. xxi. 17; and now this elegy, or Threnode, on the death of Saul and Jonathan. See note on Josh. x. 12; and *Houbigant*.

19. *The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places.*]—Instead of this, Dr. Geddes's translation is,

'O, antelope of Israel,

Pierced on thine own mountains!

The Hebrew word is צבִי, a gazel, or antelope, so that the Doctor renders the passage literally, and our translators metaphorically. He subjoins the following remarks:

'An apostrophe to Jonathan. (Compare ver. 25.) The antelope is, over all the east, regarded as the emblem of beauty and agility; and has always afforded an ample field of metaphor to the oriental bards. It is said to be common to all the deer-kind, when closely pursued, to run at last to their usual, original haunt, and there to meet the fatal stroke. Whose heart is not deeply touched by this allusion!'

21. *Nor fields of offerings.*]—Rather, 'nor fields affording oblations;' i. e. 'Let thy fields, O Gilboa, henceforth produce nothing worthy to be offered to the Lord.'

21. *As though he had not been anointed with oil.*]—'The armour of the anointed with oil.'

From the small change of one letter into another of a nearly

similar form, when somewhat mutilated, arises this very different rendering.

Dr. Delaney was the first who suggested the substitution of *קלי*, 'weapons,' or 'armour,' in this verse, for the particle *בלי*; which is the change noticed above.

22. *From the blood of the slain, &c.*—The Hebrew word *מדם*, which we translate, 'from the blood,' may be better rendered, 'without the blood.'—See *Dr. Kennicott*, vol. i. p. 119.

23. *They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.*—A beautiful metonymy. They were more rapid than the eagle in pursuit, and more courageous than the lion in combat.

Swift as the eagle cleaves the aerial way,
Through hosts of foes they bent their rapid course;
Strong as the lion darts upon his prey,
They crush'd the nations with resistless force.

Dr. Gregory's Trans. of Bp. Lowth's Lect. vol. ii. p. 160.

24. *Ye daughters of Israel.*—The following poetical paraphrase will afford a pleasing illustration of this verse:

Daughters of Judah, mourn the fatal day,
In sable grief attend your monarch's urn;
To solemn notes attune the pensive lay,
And weep those joys that never shall return:
With various wealth he made your tents o'erflow,
In princely pride your charms profusely dressed;
Bade the rich robe with ardent purple glow,
And sparkling gems adorn the tissued vest.—*IBID.*

25, 26. *O Jonathan, &c.*—Nothing, says Dr. Geddes, can be more pathetic than this inimitable stanza. Indeed, the whole composition is admirable, whether we consider it as a singularly fine piece of lyric poetry, or as a powerful engine to move to reconciliation even the bitterest adversaries of the royal author. Though Jonathan is evidently the chief object of his lamentation, yet he interweaves so artful and fine a panegyric of Saul, his avowed enemy, as must have greatly tended to destroy prejudices; and was, doubtless, highly contributive to that purpose. His ordering it to be taught and sung by those of his own tribe, could not fail to have a strong effect on the other tribes; and this, with the lenity of his government, and his known valor and piety, at length triumphed over the feeble remains of Saul's party. On the whole, we may venture

to assert, that antiquity affords not a more precious relic of genuine elegiac poetry than this ode.

The poet treats, says Bp. Lowth, though in no common manner, two common topics, and those the best adapted to the genuine elegy; he expresses his own sorrow, and he celebrates the praises of the deceased. Both sentiments are displayed in the exordium; but, as might naturally be expected, sorrow is predominant, and bursts forth with the impetuosity of exclamation in the exordium, where he exclaims,

‘O mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew nor rain upon you!’

If these passages were brought before the severe tribunal of reason, nothing could appear more absurd; but if examined by the criterion of the passions, nothing can be more consonant to nature, more beautiful, or emphatic. Not to refer effects to their real causes, is in logic an imperfection; but in poetry it is often a beauty. The appeal in the one case is to reason, in the other to the passions. When sorrow has had sufficient vent, there is leisure to expatiate on the accomplishments of the dead. In the first place, they are celebrated for their virtue and heroic actions; next for their piety and mutual affection; and lastly, for their agility and strength. Saul is honored with a particular panegyric, because he had enriched his people, and contributed to the general felicity and splendor of the state. This passage, by the way, is in the style of the most exquisite composition. The women of Israel are most happily introduced, and the subject of the encomium is admirably adapted to the female character. Jonathan is at last celebrated in a distinct eulogium, which is beautifully pathetic; it is animated with all the fervor, and sweetened with all the tenderness, of friendship.

CHAP. II. VER. 1. *He said, Unto Hebron.*]—This was the metropolis of Judah, and was situated in the midst of the tribe. In the present state of affairs, therefore, it was evidently good policy for him to go to this city in preference to any other.

9. *Over all Israel.*]—That is, over all the tribes westward of the Jordan, except the tribe of Judah, which was distinguished from the rest, we find, long before the separation of the Israelites into two kingdoms in the reign of Rehoboam.

10. *Two years.*]—Houbigant reads, ‘six years.’

13. *Joab the son of Zeruiah.*]—Zeruiah was one of David’s sisters. See 1 Chron. ii. 16. It appears that when the mother was superior in point of rank to the father, the children were denominated from her. Josephus says, that the name of Joab’s father was Suri.

14. *Play before us.*]—It might not have been Abner's intention for the young men to fight and destroy each other. All he meant, perhaps, was, that they should go through the military exercises of that day, and afford the spectators an opportunity to judge of their skill and dexterity. This led to a most sanguinary conflict, we find, in which they all mutually slew each other.

15. *Went over.*]—‘Presented themselves.’—*Dr. Geddes.*

18. *As a wild roe.*]—According to Dr. Shaw, this should have been rendered ‘the antelope.’ It is the same word in Hebrew that is used chap. i. 19.

23. *Smote him under the fifth rib.*]—Most of the ancient versions read ‘in the groin.’ The Hebrew text is not inconsistent with this rendering; for it must mean nearly the same part of the body: though to smite any one under the fifth rib seems to have been a proverbial expression for inflicting a mortal wound. ‘With the hinder end of the spear,’ is scarcely intelligible. The meaning is, that Abner turned the point of his spear backward; and, as Asahel approached him, he struck it into his groin, without turning round to face him.

26. *It will be bitterness in the latter end.*]—In civil wars, says Cicero, (Epist. Fam. l. iv.) ‘All is misery; and nothing more so than victory itself.’

27. *Unless thou hadst spoken, &c.*]—This alludes to the proposal of Abner, ver. 14, which led to the slaughter of twelve young men of each tribe.

CHAP. III. VER. 6. *Made himself strong.*]—That is, ‘was exerting himself,’ and collecting forces for the house of Saul.

8. *Am I a dog's head, &c.*]—This appears to have been a proverbial form of expression, to signify an object of the greatest contempt. Some, with Bp. Patrick, think that the text might be better rendered, ‘Am I a keeper of dogs?’ but there is no ambiguity in the Hebrew, nor any variety in the ancient versions. It did not occur to the commentators, that, in the time of David, there were no such things as packs of dogs, or hounds in those countries, and consequently no keepers of them.

Strabo, indeed, speaks of a particular people on the coast of Lybia, (lib. xvi. p. 1116.) called Agrii, who bred large dogs for the purpose of hunting the Indian cattle, which are said to have strayed to that part of the country about midsummer, and to have remained there till the middle of winter. Vid. *Xenophon. Cyneget.*

The history of the dog, in various countries, and in different ages, as a domestic animal, as trained to hunting, to the duty

of guarding his master's property, and to field-sports of every kind, &c. for the amusement, as well as the advantage of man, might form the subject of a learned and entertaining disquisition.

Every scholar has read of Ulysses's dog in the *Odyssey*, lib. xvii. ver. 291. (see, also, lib. x. 215.) and heard of the story of Actæon, who was said to have been devoured by his own hounds. Frequent allusion is made by Homer to what we should now call the sheep-dog, as the guardian of the flocks and herds. See Il. x. v. 183; xii. v. 303; and xvii. 109, as cited by the learned Bochart, *Hieroz.* lib. ii. c. 53, 56, where the reader will find much curious information on the subject.

The Jews probably learned to shew some kindness for dogs in consequence of their intercourse with the Persians, during the Babylonish captivity; for it appears from the mention of Tobias's dog, from the Parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and from the incidental circumstance of dogs eating of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table, that they were considered as domestic animals before the time of our Saviour. See ch. ix. 8, and xvi. 9.

29. *An issue.*]—That is, a gonorrhœa, or seminal discharge.

§3. *Died Abner as a fool dieth?*]—Men atrociously wicked, atheists, criminals, and idolaters, are, in Scripture, often called 'fools;' because their practices and opinions generally manifest an excessive degree of folly.

CHAP. IV. VER. 3. *And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim, and were sojourners there until this day.*]—Dr. Geddes reads, 'The aboriginal Beerothites having fled to Gittaim, where they sojourn unto this day.'

12. *And cut off their hands and their feet.*]—In times of tumult and disorder, the eastern people frequently cut off the hands and feet of persons, and afterwards expose them, as well as their heads. Lady M. W. Montague, speaking of the Turkish ministers of state, (*Let.* ii. 19.) says, 'If a minister displease the people, in three hours' time he is dragged even from his master's arms; they cut off his hands, head, and feet, and throw them before the palace-gate, with all the respect in the world, while the Sultan, to whom they profess an unlimited adoration, sits trembling in his apartment.'

This cutting off of the hands and feet of those who have behaved ill in matters of state, strange as it may seem to us, is only an old eastern custom, not yet worn out.

It seems to be a false refinement in those commentators, who suppose the hands of Baanah and Rechab were cut off, because they were employed in murdering Ish-bosheth; and their feet, because they made use of them to go to the place of assassina-

tion, or in carrying off that prince's head. Whatever may be thought of cutting off the assassinating hands, it cannot be pretended, with any shew of reason, that the feet were more guilty than any other limb. The truth seems to be, that these were the parts wont to be cut off from state-criminals, as well as their heads, whether they had or had not been particularly accessory to their guilt.

The hanging of them up at the pool in Hebron seems to have been merely on account of its being a place of great resort.

I leave it to the curious to consider whether Providence designed any reference to this ancient punishment, in secretly directing the second fall of Dagon so, that his head and the palms of his hands were cut off. See 1 Sam. v. 4.—*Harmer*.

CHAP. V. VER. 2. *The Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed my people Israel.*—This is the first time we find this expression in the sacred writings; though it is natural to suppose that Samuel frequently represented his office by the name of the 'pastor of the people.' Hence the prophets, in after-times, used it frequently to express a king, or ruler, and our great Redeemer himself is called 'the good shepherd,' and 'the great shepherd;' that is, the ruler of his people. And surely such rulers as take care of their people, as a shepherd does of his flock, are divine blessings, and for that reason are called by Isaiah, 'nursing fathers,' ch. xlix. 23.—*Dr. Willoughby*.

6. *Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither.*—On this expression, Mr. Gregory observes, (*Works*, p. 29.) that it was customary in almost every nation, at the founding of a city, to lay up an image magically consecrated (or talisman), in some retired part of it, on which the security of the place was supposed to depend. The knowledge of this practice, he imagines, will clearly illustrate the passage now referred to. See, also, *Selden*, *De Diis Syris*, cum. *Addit. Beyer*, in *Syntagm.* 1, cap. 2.

Several Jewish writers agree, that 'the blind and the lame' were images, and that these epithets were bestowed on them in derision. See Psalm cxv. 5, 7. They were of brass, and are said to have had inscriptions on them. They were set up in a recess of the fort; and though in scorn called 'the blind and the lame,' yet the keeping of the place was so confidently entrusted to them, that, if they did not protect it, the Jebusites said, (ver. 8.) 'they should not come into the house;' that is, they would never commit the safety of the fort to such palladia as these in future.

By 'the blind and the lame,' Dr. Delaney, also, understands the idols of the Jebusites, which interpretation derives great

probability from the description given of them in the Psalm already referred to.

Dr. Kennicott's translation is, 'And David said on that day, whosoever (first) smiteth the Jebusites, and through the subterraneous passage, or gutter, reacheth the blind and the lame, which are hated by David's soul, because the blind and the lame continued to say, He shall not come into this house—shall be head and captain: so Joab, the son of Zeruiah, went up first, and was chief captain.'

Bp. Patrick and others think that the expression in the text was a mark of scorn and contempt, indicating that 'the blind and the lame' were alone sufficient to repulse David, and to defend the fortress. The objection to this interpretation is, that the blind and the lame are said, ver. 8, to have been 'hated of David's soul.' Surely the distressing circumstances of blindness and lameness, which rendered these men helpless and impotent, would not, of themselves, have afforded any foundation for such enmity.

18. Rather, 'the Philistines were now come, and had spread themselves,' &c.

24. *The sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry-trees.*—This is scarcely intelligible. Some would render it, 'The sound of footsteps,' (i. e. of persons going or walking) 'at the entrance of the grove of mulberry-trees.'—See *Bp. Patrick*.

Dr. Geddes thinks that the sacred writer means the motion, or rustling of the wind, in the tops of the mulberry-trees, which probably indicated a tempest; and that this was a proper time to attack the Philistines in the rear. But the former interpretation seems preferable, as the same Hebrew word, *וְנָחַל*, is used also to signify the beginning of any thing, and the end, or entrance, of a street, &c.

CHAP. VI. VER. 4. *And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab.*—This needless repetition of the same expression in ver. 3, was, perhaps, a slight variation of the original text, at first noted in the margin, and then inserted by some scribe as we here find it.

8. *And David was displeased.*—Rather, 'grieved,' or 'afflicted.'

8. *Had made a breach upon Uzzah.*—That is, 'had smitten Uzzah.'

14. *And David danced before the Lord with all his might.*—On this circumstance, the Jews have founded a ridiculous custom. In the evening of the day on which they drew water out of the pool of Siloam, those who were esteemed the wise men of Israel, the elders of the Sanhedrim, the rulers of the

synagogues, and the doctors of the schools, met in the court of the temple. The temple-music played, and the old men danced, while the women in the balconies round the court, and the men on the ground, were spectators. All the sport was to see these venerable fathers of the nation skip and dance, clap their hands, and sing; and they who played the fool most egregiously, acquitted themselves with most honor. In this manner they spent the greater part of the night, till at length two priests sounded a retreat with trumpets. This mad festivity was repeated every evening, except on the evening before the Sabbath, which happened during this festival, and on the evening before the last and great day of the feast.—*Jennings' Jewish Antiq.* vol. ii. p. 235.

19. *A flagon of wine.*]—Instead of this, which is supported only by the Arabic version, Dr. Geddes translates it, 'a fritter.' The Septuagint has *λαγανον απο τηγανος*, which must very much resemble our 'pancake,' or 'fritter.'

20. *Who uncovered himself.*]—We are only to understand by this expression, that David divested himself of his royal robes, in order to appear 'before the Lord' with more humility. No part of his body was exposed; for he had only put off his outer garments. The word 'shamefully,' or 'shamelessly,' as it is in some copies of our Bible, is not in the original; and, by 'the vain fellows,' Michal meant the Levites and common musicians, who accompanied the ark. See note on 1 Sam. xix. 24; and the texts referred to in the Index under the word 'naked.'

CHAP. VII. VER. 1. *When the king sat in his house.*]—This phrase is opposed to going in and coming out. It means, therefore, that David's kingdom was at peace, and that he now enjoyed a state of security and repose.

7. *The tribes of Israel.*]—Rather, as Dr. Waterland, Houbigant, and others, read, 'the judges of Israel.' Some Hebrew copyist appears to have written the word *שֹׁפְטֵי*, instead of *שִׁבְטֵי*. See the parallel place, 1 Chron. xvii. 6, where it is 'judges.' An imperfect *פ*, in manuscript, might be easily taken for a *ב*.

11. *An house.*]—The word 'house' here seems to mean a family, or a regular succession of hereditary monarchs. In the same sense, we still say the house of Bourbon, the house of Stuart, &c. See verses 25, 26.

16. *Thy throne shall be established for ever.*]—It is evident from verse 19, that the expression, 'for ever,' means only long duration.

18. *Sat before the Lord.*]—Dr. Pococke, in his first volume,

has given us the figure of a person half-sitting and half-kneeling; that is, kneeling so as to rest the most muscular part of the body on his heels. This, he observes, is the manner in which inferior persons sit at this day before great men in the east; and it is considered as a very humble posture. Agreeably to this, he informs us, in his second volume, that the attendants of the English consul, when he waited on the Caia of the Pasha of Tripoli, sat resting behind on their hams. Mr. Drummond gives a similar account.

In this manner, I suppose, it was that David sat before the Lord, when he went into the sanctuary to bless him for his promise concerning his family. Abarbanel, and some Christian expositors, seem to be perplexed about the words ‘sitting before the Lord;’ but sitting after this manner was expressive of the greatest humiliation, and therefore no improper posture for one who appeared before the ark of God.—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 336.

23. This verse appears to be rather confused, and is scarcely intelligible. There is a parallel passage, 1 Chron. xvii. 21, 22. But as that is not free from corruption and mistake, Dr. Kennicott perhaps has given us the true reading, of which the following is a version of the latter part: ‘To make himself a name, and to do for them things great and terrible, to drive out from before thy people (whom thou redeemedst to thee out of Egypt) the nations and their gods. And thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel, to be a people unto thee for ever; for thou, Jehovah, hast been their God?’

CHAP. VIII. VER. 2. *He smote Moab, and measured them with a line.*—Grotius’s interpretation of this text is, that he divided the territory of the Moabites into three parts, and that he suffered the natives of one only to survive, having put all the rest to death, that he might have no difficulty in keeping possession of the land in future. Le Clerc is of opinion, that it was customary with eastern monarchs to make their prisoners lie down on the ground in regular rows, and then to put just such a portion of them to death as they pleased, by measuring them with a line. It is not improbable that this custom prevailed among the Moabites themselves; for it does not appear from any other text, that it was common among the Hebrews; and therefore David, perhaps, inflicted on this cruel people the same punishment, which they had inflicted on others. We read of a similar act of retaliation in the case of Adoni-bezek. See Judg. i. 6, 7.

4. *Seven hundred horsemen.*—In the parallel place, 1 Chron.

xviii. 4, it is 'seven thousand,' which is the more probable number. See note on Numb. i. 46.

6. *David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus.*—The inspired writer means that part of Syria, which lay near Libanus, of which Damascus was the metropolis. It was watered by five rivers; the two principal were Abana and Pharpar, which descended from mount Hermon. The former ran through the city, and the latter washed its walls. By thus securing the conquest of this territory, and the subjection of the Syrians of Damascus, the Israelites, under David, were now in the possession of the promised land in its full extent. Compare Gen. xv. 18; Deut. i. 7; Josh. i. 4.

13. *And David gat him a name, &c.*—Houbigant and others are of opinion, that the sacred text is here corrupt. Availing himself of the parallel place, 1 Chron. xviii. 12, the first mentioned critic regulates and translates it thus. 'Moreover, David, having conquered Syria, when he returned, waged war with the Edomites in the valley of salt, and slew of them eighteen thousand men.' Instead of 'the valley of salt,' Dr. Geddes considers the Hebrew word מֶלַח as a proper name, and renders it 'the vale of Melah.' Salmasius thinks that this vale was in Edom, and derived its name from the salt springs which were in it.

16. *Recorder.*—An officer nearly similar, perhaps, to what we now call 'historiographer.'

17. *Ahimelech the son of Abiathar.*—This seems to be a mistake of the copyist; for we read, 1 Sam. xxii. 20, that Abiathar was the son of Ahimelech. It is very difficult to settle the pedigree of this family from the notices which we have of them in these two books of Samuel, and in the first book of the Chronicles. On such occasions, we should recollect, that there might be several persons of the same name.—See *Dr. Wall*, and *Bp. Patrick*.

17. *The scribe.*—That is, as we should now say, 'the secretary.'

18. *The Cherethites and the Pelethites.*—These appear to have constituted the body guard, which constantly attended the persons of the Jewish kings. The Cherethites were probably a remnant of the Philistines, and inhabited a part of the sea-coast of Palestine. Compare Ezek. xxv. 16; Zeph. ii. 5.

It is probable that the Pelethites were an Israelitish family; for two persons of the name of Peleth are mentioned in Scripture, one of the tribe of Reuben, and the other of the tribe of Judah.

See Numb. xvi. 1; 1 Chron. ii. 33. We may form some probable estimate of the number of these people, at least in the time of Solomon, from the shields and targets which that monarch ordered to be made apparently for the use of his guard. These we find were five hundred, 1 Kings x. 16, 17. The Cherethites and Pelethites were properly the king's domestic troops, for whom apartments were provided at the entrance of the palace, that they might be ready on the shortest notice, in case of any sudden emergence. For further information the reader is referred to *Lewis's Heb. Orig.*; and to the learned Dissertation of *M. Hen. Opitius* on this subject.

CHAP. IX. VER. 10. *Thy master's son shall eat bread alway at my table.*—The eating at courts was of two kinds; the one public and ceremonious, the other private. Might not the intention of those passages, which speak of a right to eat at the royal table, be to point out a right to a seat there, when the repast was public and solemn?

Sir John Chardin understood it after this manner. So when king David on his death-bed directed his son Solomon to shew kindness to the sons of Barzillai, the Gileadite, and to let them be of those that should eat at his table, he tells us in a note in his MSS. that this was to be understood of the Majilis, not of the daily and ordinary repasts there. Now at this majilis, he observes, many persons have a right to a seat, whereas others obtain permission by special grace, and extraordinary favor. In this passage we are to understand that they received a right to attend at those times.

He understands 2 Kings xxv. 28, 29, after the same manner, as signifying Evil-merodach's placing Jehoiachin at the majilis before other princes. Thus, in his coronation of Solyman III. he describes a young captive Tartar prince as admitted by the king of Persia to his majilis, p. 116.

This notion seems to be confirmed by David's not being expected at the table of Saul, 'till the day of the new moon,' which was always a public festival, and his being looked for then, 1 Sam. xx. 25.

To which we may add, that understanding things after this manner removes embarrassments from what is said concerning Mephibosheth. Though he was to eat, on all public occasions, at the king's table, yet he would want the produce of his lands for food at other times. It was very proper, also, for David to mention to Ziba the circumstance of his being to eat at all public times as one of his own sons, at the royal table, that Ziba might understand it would be requisite for him to bring the produce of the land to Jerusalem; and that in such quantities

too, as to support Mephibosheth in a manner answerable to the dignity of one who attended at public times at court. 'Thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food to eat: *and* (for that is the particle, which our translators should have made use of, not *but*) Mephibosheth, thy master's son, shall eat bread alway at my table.' Thus, along with his admission to the royal assemblies, considerable pensions, according to Sir J. Chardin, were assigned the young Tartar prince for his maintenance, by the king of Persia. See *Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 105.

CHAP. X. VER. 16. *And Hadarezer.*]—This is the same person mentioned chap. viii. 3, where the name is spelt Hadad-ezer, and Houbigant says, that he found it so written here in five manuscripts. The resh ך and the daleth ד are often confounded. By 'the river,' in this verse, we are to understand the Euphrates. Instead of 'they came to Helam,' Montanus has in the margin, 'they came up with their army.' So also, in the following verse. We have no notice in the Holy Scriptures of Helam, as the name of a place, except it be so understood in this passage.

18. *David slew the men of seven hundred chariots.*]—Here is another confused account, says Pilkington, with respect to numbers. In 1 Chron. xix. 18, it is, 'David slew of the Syrians seven thousand men which fought in chariots, and forty thousand foot-men.' These are the mistakes of scribes writing 'seven thousand' for 'seven hundred,' and 'foot-men' instead of 'horsemen.' The Syriac and Arabic versions read seven hundred chariots, and four thousand horsemen. The version might have been, 'And David destroyed seven hundred chariots,' &c. See note on Num. i. 46.

CHAP. XI. VER. 2. *Washing herself.*]—It appears from verse 4, that Bath-sheba was not bathing for amusement; but for the purpose of religious purification, in compliance with the laws of Moses.

4. *And David sent messengers, and took her.*]—The kings of Israel appear to have taken their wives with very great ease. This is quite consistent with the account given in general of the manner in which eastern princes form matrimonial alliances. Compare Gen. vi. 2. 'The king, in his marriage, uses no other ceremony than this: he sends an azagi to the house where the lady lives, where the officer announces to her, it is the king's pleasure that she should remove instantly to the palace. She then dresses herself in the best manner, and immediately obeys. From that time he assigns her an apartment in the palace, and gives her a house elsewhere in any part she chooses. Then,

when he makes her Iteghe, it seems to be the nearest resemblance to marriage; for whether in the court, or the camp, he orders one of the judges to pronounce in his presence, that he, the king, has chosen his handmaid, naming her, for his queen: upon which the crown is put on her head, but she is not anointed.—*Bruce's Travels*, vol. iii. p. 87.

14. *David wrote a letter, &c.*—The classical story of Prætus, Bellerophon, and Anteia, seems to have been formed from the history of Joseph and Potiphar's wife, and this disgraceful incident in the life of David.—See *Homer*, Il. vi. 156.

15. *That he may be smitten and die.*—David, having failed in his base, insidious attempt to make the injured husband believe himself the father of his adulterous offspring, conceived the horrid project of destroying Uriah, which succeeded agreeably to his wish. Many were the aggravations of this murder. 1. It was deliberate. He took time to consider of it; for he wrote a letter about it, and though he had time to have countermanded the order afterwards, before it could be put in execution, yet he did not do it. 2. He sent the letter by Uriah himself: nothing could be more base and barbarous, than thus to make him accessory to his own death. And what a paradox was it, that he could bear such malice against him, in whom he yet could repose such confidence, as to entrust him with letters of which he must not know the purport! 3. Advantage must have been taken of Uriah's own courage and zeal for his king and country, which deserved the greatest praise and recompense, in order to betray him the more easily to his fate. If he had not been forward to expose himself, he was an officer of such consequence, perhaps, that Joab could not have exposed him; and that this noble fire should be designedly turned against himself, was a most detestable instance of ingratitude. 4. Many must be involved in David's guilt. Joab, the general, to whom the blood of his soldiers ought to be precious, must perpetrate the crime. He, and all that retired from Uriah, when they ought in conscience to have supported him, became guilty of his death. 5. Uriah cannot thus die alone; the party he commands, is in danger of being cut off with him; and it proved so: for some of the people, even the servants of David, (so they are called, to aggravate David's sin, in being so prodigal of their lives,) fell with him, ver. 17. Nay, this wilful ill conduct, by which Uriah must be betrayed, might have been of fatal consequence to the whole army, and have obliged them to raise the siege.—*Henry*.

CHAP. XII. VER. 4. *There came a traveller unto the rich man.*—This may be applied to David's wandering affection,

which he suffered to range from his own house, and to covet another's wife. The Jewish Rabbis say it represents the evil disposition that is in us, which must be diligently watched when we feel its motions. On this subject, they have the following ingenious observation: 'In the beginning it is only a traveller, but in time it becomes a guest; and, at last, the master of the house.'—*Bp. Patrick.*

4. *But took the poor man's lamb, &c.]*—The prophet, in this parable, does not mention the murder of Uriah, as that was committed to conceal the adultery. This would have made the resemblance more complete; but if it had been mentioned, David must have readily apprehended Nathan's meaning, and would not have pronounced a sentence of condemnation on himself. Nathan, therefore, had a proper opportunity to shew, if the rich man deserved death for this unjust action, how much more he deserved it, who had not only taken another man's wife, but also caused her husband to be slain by the enemies of Israel.—*Id.*

11. *I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house.]*—This was notoriously fulfilled in Absalom's conspiracy against his father. Such Scripture phrases as these do not mean, that God either does, or can do evil himself; but only that he permits such evil to be done, as he foresaw would be done, though he might have prevented it, if he had pleased. The word here translated 'evil,' signifies 'affliction,' or 'misfortune.'—*Le Clerc.*

13. *The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die.]*—He had incurred the penalty of death on two accounts; as an adulterer, and as a murderer. But, on his repentance, the prophet pronounces an absolution on him so far, that he should be pardoned the guilt, and part of the punishment; i. e. he should not perish eternally, nor here suffer the death, which he so justly deserved.—*Bp. Patrick.*

18. *The child died.]*—It may seem strange, that David should pray so earnestly to God to spare the life of a child, who, if he had lived, would have been a lasting monument of the guilt and infamy of his parents: but it must be ascribed to his excessive fondness for Bath-sheba, which made him forget every thing in this child, except that motive of endearment. Besides, there is something in human nature, which prompts us to rate things after a manner seemingly unaccountable; and to estimate them, not according to their real value, but according to the expense, the trouble, and even the distress, which they cost us. Nor should it be forgotten, that David's excessive mourning did not proceed so much from the fear of losing the child, as from a

deep sense of his own sin, and of God's displeasure manifested against him in the child's sickness. See *Poole*, and *Fawkes*.

27. *I have fought against Rabbah, and have taken the city of waters.*—Rabbah was the metropolis of the Ammonites, and its name in Hebrew denotes grandeur and increase. There are other cities so called; but this was partly surrounded by the river Jabbok, and of course well watered, which was the reason that our translators called it 'the city of waters.' Houbigant, after Josephus, renders the passage very differently, thus: 'I have fought against Rabbah, and I have cut off the waters from it:' which assigns a good reason for Joab's message to David, as it was not probable that the city, after being deprived of water, could hold out long.—See *Dr. Wells*, vol. i. p. 332.

30. *The weight whereof was a talent of gold.*—According to Bp. Cumberland, Arbuthnot, and others, the weight of a talent of gold was nearly a hundred and fourteen pounds. Some commentators think, therefore, with great probability, that we should substitute the word 'value' instead of 'weight.' Others are of opinion, that the Syriac talent is here meant, and not the Hebrew. If so, this would reduce the weight to about twenty-eight pounds.

31. *Put them under saws, and under harrows of iron.*—Every friend to humanity will hear with pleasure, that this verse may admit of a much milder interpretation than is expressed in our present translation. The Hebrew prefix ל , which is here used throughout, and which we translate 'under,' sometimes, as Noldius and other lexicographers have abundantly shewn, signifies 'to;' and, to put the people to 'saws, harrows, axes, and the brick-kiln,' means no more than to employ them as slaves in the most menial and laborious offices. The form of expression is an Anglicism, as well as an Hebraism, and we still say 'to put a person to the plough, to the anvil, to the last,' &c. As to the parallel place, 1 Chron. xx. 3, which says that 'he cut them with saws,' &c. it may well mean that he divided, or separated them into classes, and then employed them as before mentioned. Instead of harrows of iron, the Hebrew may be interpreted, more properly, 'iron-mines.'

CHAP. XIII. VER. 2. *For she was a virgin.*—Young women of condition in the east are always kept from the sight of men, except their brothers, who could not legally marry them. They were so strictly guarded, it seems, that it was difficult for any man to gain access to them without witnesses. This accounts for the distress of Amnon, and the wicked device which he followed, in order to gratify his criminal passion.

12. *Nay, my brother, do not force me.*]—Tamar's speech is wonderfully pathetic; 'Nay, my brother,' &c. She reminds him of his relation to her, which she hoped would influence him not to touch her, much less to offer violence to her, which was abominable even to a stranger. 'Do not this folly.' She prays him to recollect the heinousness of the crime, and how highly offensive it would be to God. 'Whither shall I go?' Beside the sin against God, she begs that he would consider what infamy and disgrace it would bring upon her. 'Thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel.' Such a vile action, she concludes, would tarnish his fame for ever, and make him looked upon as a man void of sense, religion, honor, and even humanity.—*Bp. Patrick.*

14. *There is no cause.*]—Houbigant would correct the original from the Hexapla, and read, 'Nay, my brother, let it not be so.' Compare verse 12.

18. *A garment of divers colours.*]—Party-colored vestments were esteemed honorable. In making them, many pieces of different-colored ribbands were sewed together. (*Shaw's Trav.* p. 228.) Kings' daughters were thus arrayed. Compare Ps. xlv. 10.

19. *And Tamar put ashes on her head.*]—This was a general practice with the people of the east, in token of the extremity of sorrow, and was common both to the Hebrews and the Greeks, Job ii. 12. 'They rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven.' Ezek. xxvii. 30. 'And shall cast up dust upon their heads.' Homer affords some instances of the same kind, as it respects the Greeks, Thus, of Laertes he says:

Deep from his soul he sigh'd, and sorrowing spread
A cloud of ashes on his hoary head.

ODYSS. xxiv. 369. POPE.

And of Achilles:

Cast on the ground, with furious hands he spread
The scorching ashes o'er his graceful head:
His purple garments, and his golden hairs;
Those he deforms with dust, and these he tears.

ILIAD xviii. v. 22.

'Let men lament and implore ever so much, or pour ever so much dust upon their heads, God will not grant what ought not to be granted.'—*Maximus Tyrius*, dis. xxx. p. 336.

CHAP. XIV. VER. 7. *My coal.*]—A striking metaphorical expression, signifying the small, precarious remains of light and comfort, by which her hopes were to be revived, and her

sorrows assuaged. Heathen writers have borrowed this figure of speech from the Holy Scriptures, in which a man and his successors are sometimes called 'a lamp,' or 'light.' Plato, speaking of those who had escaped the Deluge, calls them *σμήκη ζώπυρα τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων γένος*, 'the few live coals of the human race.'—De Rep. lib. iii.

Lucian has nearly the same expression in Timon, ad init. See chap. xxi. 17; 1 Kings xi. 36, and xv. 4.

9. *My lord, O king, the iniquity be on me, &c.*—The king having told the woman that she might return to her house, and leave the care of her business to him, she adds, with great address, that, if she had pressed his majesty to any thing in itself unjust, or had in any way misrepresented the case, she wished all the punishment of the guilt, or misrepresentation, might fall on her own head. The king then told her, ver. 10, if any body molested her any more, to bring them before him, and he would take care to stop any further proceedings against her. She then begged, ver. 11, that, in making that promise to stay the avengers of blood, he would 'remember the Lord his God;' i. e. remember he made that promise in the presence of God; thus drawing him distantly and insensibly into the obligation of an oath; and her address had its effect: 'As the Lord liveth,' said he, 'there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.'—*Delaney*.

Houbigant thinks the woman insinuates, in the ninth verse, that she is less concerned for her son and her family, than for the son and the family of the king; and that some of the verses in this passage have been transposed. It seems strange, indeed, that the woman should return in the 15th verse to speak of herself and her son, after she had so plainly opened her case in the 13th verse. This learned editor, therefore, after the words, 'lest they destroy my son,' ver. 11, inserts verses 15, 16, and 17. After this, he reads the remaining part of verse 11, 'And he said, as the Lord liveth,' in connection with the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 18th verses. This transposition certainly renders her address more connected, and therefore more intelligible.

13. *For the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, &c.*—Dr. Geddes's translation of this verse is, 'The woman said: On what ground hast thou thus decided, with respect to God's people? From this decision the king himself is not guiltless; in as far as he bringeth not home his own exiled son.' Houbigant's version is nearly the same.

26. *He weighed the hair of his head.*—In those days, hair was accounted a great ornament, and the longer it was the more

it was esteemed. In after-ages, art was used to make it grow, and to grow thick. They also anointed their hair with fragrant oils of myrrh, and cinnamon; and then powdered it with dust of gold: all which made it very ponderous. Josephus informs us, that such ostentation was in use among the Jews; for speaking of the guard which attended Solomon with long flowing hair about their shoulders, he says, that they scattered in their hair every day little particles of gold, which made their hair shine and sparkle by the reflection of the rays of the sun on it. These circumstances may, in some measure, account for the great weight of Absalom's hair.—*Bp. Patrick*, in loc.

26. *At every year's end.*]—Or, rather, as the original will admit, 'at stated periods.' So *Houbigant*.

26. *Two hundred shekels.*]—There may have been mistakes in the numbers; especially as in former times these were expressed by numeral letters only: in these ל, 'lamed,' stands for 30, and ר, 'resch,' for 200. Now, from the similarity between those letters, a mistake may easily be made; for, if the upper stroke of the ל were but a little impaired, as it frequently is, both in MSS. and printed books, it might readily pass for ר, 'resch,' and the remains of the upper part of the ל, 'lamed,' might be mistaken for the stroke over the ר, which makes it the character of 200. But how could מאתיים, 200 in the text, be put in the place of שלשים, 30? Very easily, when the numbers became expressed by words at length instead of letters. This makes the hair of Absalom to amount to only thirty shekels in weight, which is about seven ounces and a half, a quantity amply sufficient to excite astonishment, and yet not beyond the compass of credibility, especially as we are not obliged to conclude, that this weight was polled off every year: for מקץ ימים לימים 'from the end of days to days,' does not necessarily imply once a year, but at proper and convenient times, as the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel has expressed it מומן עדן לעדן, which may imply whenever it became too weighty, or inconvenient.—*Dr. A. Clarke*.

Other commentators are of opinion, that by 'shekel after the king's weight,' we are to understand the Babylonish shekel. But this is admitting of an interpolation without necessity. It is possible that weight on this occasion might be taken for value. See note on chap. xii. 30. But the price of this wonderful head of hair, as the text now stands in our translation, would be as objectionable as the weight itself, though some of the Rabbis say that the ladies of Jerusalem bought it. As to powdering the hair with gold dust, mentioned by *Bp. Patrick*

and others, on the authority of Josephus, that may be considered as a Rabbinical fiction.—See *Le Clerc*.

29. *Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king.*—This is rather obscurely expressed. The meaning is, that Absalom sent for Joab with an intention of sending him with a message to the king. His object was to procure an interview and a reconciliation through the mediation of Joab. See verse 32.

CHAP. XV. VER. 7. *After forty years.*—I have no doubt, says Grotius, but that the Jewish scribe has made a mistake here, by adding two letters (ד) to the Hebrew word ארבע, ‘four,’ which makes it ‘forty.’ Josephus says, that only ‘four’ years intervened. So also Theodoret. The same alteration of the Hebrew text is countenanced by the Syriac and Arabic versions, and by some copies of the Vulgate. After all, the date may refer to the years of the King’s reign. See the parallel text.

11. *That were called.*—Rather, ‘that were invited’ by Absalom. Such was one of the meanings of ‘called’ in the time of our translators.

12. *The people increased continually with Absalom.*—Some readers, not ignorant of the world, may yet wonder how Absalom could excite so large a portion of the people to rebellion, against a king distinguished for so many victories, so many meritorious actions, and, we may add, for so many virtues. They should consider, therefore, that there were many persons, who had been attached to Saul, that were now deprived of influence, and not held in the same degree of honor; that a numerous party, who had joined Ish-bosheth, were either apprehensive for their own safety, or certainly despaired of success. Then, as Tacitus observes, all are sometimes led into transgression by the hatred of an individual. The haughty insolence of Joab, and the impunity, with which he was allowed to commit an atrocious crime, brought an odium on the king, who suffered him thus to act towards his fellow-subjects. David’s other ministers, also, though they did not want prudence, yet from the long enjoyment of power, and the continued smiles of fortune, became rather proud, and lost their popularity. The sins of David himself were, indeed, few in number, but those which he committed against Uriah were of the blackest die. After adultery, murder; and after murder, marriage with his associate in guilt. Such atrocious wickedness on the part of the king must have rendered every person doubtful and insecure, with respect to those blessings, which all men hold most dear, the marriage-bed, and life. In the estimation of the women, also, we may believe, that the name of Bath-sheba

was infamous, and her power odious and contemptible. To these causes of hatred and disaffection must be added that avenging God, who suffered the minds of the people, when once inflamed, to carry them to whatever excesses they chose.

Euripides in his *Erechtheus* has the following admirable passage. ‘When raised to power, beware how thou injurest the feelings of the people. He who dishonors the descendants of the virtuous poor, sharpens the sword against himself, and ties the halter round his own neck.’ Lust, we should remember, ruined the family of Pisistratus; and lust expelled the Tarquins from their kingdom. Many other instances are mentioned by Aristotle, *Politic. lib. i. cap. 10.* See *Grotius*.

18. *The Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath.*]—These seem to have been Philistines, who, with their chief, Ittai, had left their country and joined David, either after his accession to the throne, or while he lived at Ziklag.

The Jews say, that Ittai was the son of Achish, king of Gath, who, from motives of attachment to David, came at this juncture, at the head of six hundred men, to offer him his services.

22. *And Ittai the Gittite passed over,—and all the little ones that were with him.*]—It is not a very unusual thing, in the east, for persons to carry their whole family with them, when they go to war. The mention of ‘little ones,’ as being with Ittai the Gittite, when he attended king David flying before his son Absalom, appears very strange to us; and for this reason, Sir J. Chardin says, in a note on the text, that this practice is usual with the greater part of the eastern people, and especially with the Arabs.

30. *And had his head covered.*]—The custom of covering the head was practised by persons in great distress, or when they were convicted of crimes, and loaded with disgrace and infamy. Compare Esther vi. 12; 2 Sam. xix. 4; Ezek. xii. 6. Thus, Darius, when he was informed by Tyriotes, the eunuch, that his queen was dead, and that she had suffered no violence from Alexander, covered his head, and wept a long while; then throwing off the garment that covered him, he gave the gods thanks for Alexander’s moderation and justice. (*Q. Curtius*, l. 4. c. 10. § 33.) So, also, when the same prince was in the power of Bessus, who soon after murdered him, he took his leave of Artabazus with his head covered.—*Id.* l. v. c. 12. § 8. See *Chandler’s Life of David*, vol. ii. p. 304.

Homer gives us an image somewhat similar in his description of Ulysses, *Odyss. lib. viii. 92.*

Αψ Οδυσσευς, καλα κρατα καλυψαμενος, γοασκεν.

Again Ulysses veiled his pensive head;
Again, unmann'd, a shower of sorrows shed.

CHAP. XVI. VER. 1. *An hundred of summer-fruits.*]—Some commentators are of opinion that this 'summer-fruit' consisted of water-melons, cucumbers, or citrons.

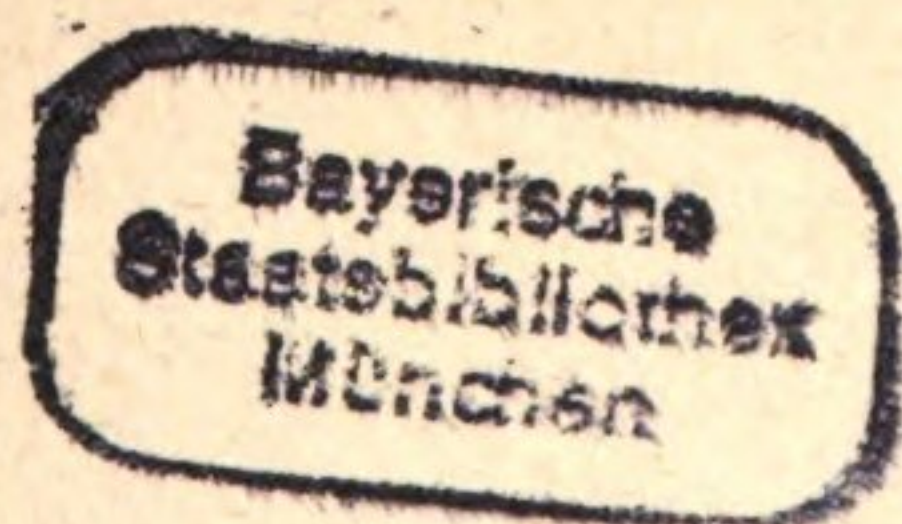
1. *And a bottle of wine.*]—Rather, 'a skin of wine.' See note on Josh. ix. 4.

10. *Let him curse; because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David.*]—Not that God commanded it by his word, for that severely forbids cursing; but the true meaning is, that David considered Shimei as an instrument in the hand of God, and therefore took all his abuses patiently; being conscious, that his crimes deserved the insults of this vile Benjamite.—*Poole.*

13. *And cast dust.*]—Sir John Chardin informs us, that generally, in the east, those who accuse a criminal, or demand justice against him, throw dust on him, as much as to say, 'He deserves to be put under ground:' and that 'Be covered with earth,' or 'Earth be upon thy head,' is a common expression with the Turks and Persians. The Jews certainly thought St. Paul deserved death, when 'they threw dust into the air,' Acts xxii. 23; and Shimei might intend to indicate, by 'casting dust,' that David was unworthy to live. This satisfactorily illustrates the text. The conduct of Shimei will appear more expressive of detestation and insult, when we recollect that it was an ancient custom of state, for a person to go before monarchs, and sprinkle the ground with water, in order to lay the dust. Dr. Pococke and the consul were treated with this respect, we find, on their entering Grand Cairo. The same custom is alluded to in the well-known fable of Phædrus, in which a slave is represented going before Augustus, and officiously laying the dust. To throw dust, therefore, must naturally be considered not only as a great annoyance, but as a mark of indignation and contempt.

14. *Came weary, and refreshed themselves there.*]—On reading these words, we are naturally led to enquire what place it was they came to, and where they refreshed themselves. Instead, therefore, of rendering the Hebrew word עִיפִים, 'weary,' Houbigant, and others, consider it as the proper name of a place, and read, 'being come to Aiphim, they refreshed themselves there.' There are many names of places, in the Bible, which occur only once. See *Reland's* copious Index.

21. *Ahithophel said, &c.*]—Ahithophel advised this action,



because it would shew, that his enmity to his father was irreconcilable, and consequently would attach to his interest all those who were disaffected to David, when they once saw that there was no danger of their being sacrificed, in consequence of a reconciliation between the father and son. This advice, for the present, was in appearance wise; but it was in reality pernicious. Could not the crafty statesman foresee, that this action, for which some men might now become more attached to Absalom, would one day make him detestable in their eyes, when they reflected on the atrociousness of it? This species of guilt was made a capital offence by the law of God, Lev. xx. 11, and 'not named even among the Gentiles.' It was a degree of guilt, for which they must one day judge him more worthy to lose his crown, than Reuben his birth-right, 1 Chron. v. 1. However, this advice was immediately embraced; for Ahithophel was then deemed as unerring, as if the oracle of God had dictated it, ver. 23. Thus was David's adultery, which had been planned, and, perhaps, perpetrated in the same place, judicially punished, and thus was God's vengeance, which had been denounced on it by his prophet, signally executed. See chap. xii. 11.—*Dr. Delaney, and Grotius.*

The harem of a vanquished Oriental prince is still considered, by the laws of war, as the property of his conqueror.

CHAP. XVII. VER. 3.—*The man whom thou seekest is as if all returned.*]—Houbigant, by a slight transposition, and reading *לְאִשָּׁהּ* for *הָאִשָּׁה*, renders this clause, agreeably to the Septuagint, 'as a spouse returns to her husband.'

13. *Then shall all Israel bring ropes.*]—Houbigant, by a slight alteration, reads, more intelligibly, 'All Israel shall throw a net over that city, and we will draw the net together, till not a stone, or pebble, be left in it.'

16. *Pass over.*]—That is, 'the Jordan' understood.

17. *En-rogel.*]—A well near Jerusalem called the 'Fuller's well.'

18. *Had a well in his court.*]—Rather, 'a cistern,' for the purpose of catching rain-water. These cisterns, in general, had steps, that persons might go down and dip up the water, when it was near the bottom.—See *Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 184.

19. *Ground corn.*]—Dr. Geddes translates this 'pounded grain.' He thinks it was barley, which, wetted with water, was pounded in a stone mortar till it quitted the husk, and then exposed to dry. Josephus says, she spread 'flakes of wool' on the cloth.

CHAP. XVIII. VER. 8. *And the wood devoured more people that day than the sword.*]—The meaning appears to be, that

more were slain in the wood than in the field; or more in the pursuit than in the battle. Such is the relation of Josephus respecting this engagement. It is probable, that this wood was full of pits and quagmires; and many, like Absalom, might have been entangled among the trees and bushes.

9. *And the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, &c.*—Some think that Absalom hung by his hair; and others that his neck was so wedged between the boughs by the rapid flight of the mule, that he was not able to disengage himself. It should be remembered, that he must have had an helmet on when he went to battle, and therefore his hair could not easily have been entangled in the boughs.

17. *And laid a very great heap of stones upon him.*—Bp. Patrick, in his commentary on this text, observes, that thus he was, in some measure, stoned, as the law ordered a rebellious son to be. Adricomius, in his description of the Holy Land, says, that this heap remained to his days; and that all travellers, as they went by it, used to throw a stone to add to the heap, in detestation of his rebellion against his father.

After this manner the custom is commonly understood; but if what Egmont and Heyman tell us be true, that all the Mohammedans, who go in pilgrimage to mount Sinai, never fail to visit the place where there is the print of a camel's foot on the rock, supposed to be that of Mohammed, on which account, by way of respect, they take a stone with them, which has occasioned a great heap of stones to be formed near that spot, it is evident, that these heaps are considered by the eastern people merely as monuments to keep up the memory of certain events, whether good, or bad; and that the adding of a stone to them, by every one that approaches, is in truth only intended to prevent the dissipation of these uncemented memorials.

The first raising of a heap of stones over Absalom was, in like manner, intended merely as a memorial of this battle, or of the place in which he was buried; and by no means as executing the law relating to rebellious sons. We may form this conclusion from their being accustomed then, as well as now, to have heaps of stones for preserving the remembrance of pleasing events, as well as facts that deserved detestation, which plainly appears from Josh. iv. 3, 6; and from Gen. xxxi. 46, 52. See note on Judg. iii. 19.

18. *Absalom in his life-time had—reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale.*—This dale is mentioned, Gen. xiv. 17. and was not far from Jerusalem; near which there is to this day a monument shewn to travellers, called Absalom's

pillar. It is a chamber cut with a chisel out of a single rock, and is a square of eight paces from outside to outside. The inside is wholly plain, but the outside is adorned with pilasters of the same stone. The upper part, or covering, is in the form of a cone, pretty high and large, and having on its top a kind of flower-pot. But it is evident, that this is a more modern structure; for, in the days of Josephus, the monument then said to be Absalom's was nothing more than a single marble pillar.—See *Bp. Patrick*; and *Josephus*, *Antiq.* lib. vii. c. ix.

18. *I have no son.*—He had three sons and one daughter. See chap. xiv. 27. But Kimchi, and other Hebrew Rabbis, say, that his sons were now all dead. The Chaldee paraphrase is to the same effect.

CHAP. XIX. VER. 18. *And there went over a ferry-boat.*—Dr. Geddes reads, 'These last facilitated the king's passage over the Jordan, and were very serviceable in bringing over the king's household.' Josephus, and some of the ancient translators, understand this of throwing a bridge over the Jordan. St. Jerome supposes, that they only forded the river before the king, and pointed out the proper place for crossing. Dr. Wall says that he can find no translation which speaks of 'a ferry-boat,' except the English. But if he had looked into Montanus, or Walton, he would have found that the Hebrew word עברה is rendered by 'scapha.' Whatever facilitated the means of crossing, or going over the river, might with propriety be called עברה.

28. *To cry.*—Rather, 'to complain.'

29. *I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.*—We find, chap. ix. 10, that David had given a grant to Mephibosheth of all the land, which his grandfather Saul possessed, and that Ziba was to cultivate it, and to account for the produce. It is probable, that some subsequent grant is alluded to in this verse, by which Mephibosheth was to have one half of the produce, and Ziba the other, for his care and management of it.

35. *Can I discern between good and evil?*—Barzillai's question has no reference to moral good and evil; but rather to the privations and enjoyments of life, as he explains himself in the following part of this verse. He had lost his taste and relish for the dainties of the royal table.

37. *That I may die in mine own city, &c.*—The whole of this little episode is extremely beautiful. Barzillai finishes his address to the king with the request, that he would suffer him to enjoy what old men naturally desire; 'to die in the place where they had lived, and to be buried with their ancestors.'

43. *We have ten parts in the king.*—By 'the king' is here

meant the kingdom; ten parts of which the men of Israel said belonged to them, because the tribe of Simeon, being intermixed with that of Judah, it is probable now came with 'the men of Israel.'

CHAP. XX. VER. 2. *So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba.*]—If it be seriously considered what a series of troubles David's adultery brought on him, it will be an awful warning to men how they offend God. 1. The death of his child by Bath-sheba. 2. His daughter Tamar ravished by her brother. 3. That brother murdered by another. 4. Absalom's rebellion against his father. 5. Most of his subjects desert him. 6. One of them curses him to his face. 7. His wives are defiled in the face of the sun. 8. His son is slain in his sin and rebellion; and 9. No sooner is this rebellion over, than that of Sheba begins. After all, this is for our comfort and instruction. As God designed all this in mercy toward David, to make him a sincere penitent, that he might forgive and reward him at last; so will he turn all the afflictions which he brings on his children to their advantage, if they improve by their afflictions as David did. We also learn from this, that afflictions are absolutely necessary to keep us awake, and to make us look up to God.—*Bp. Wilson.*

3. *They were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.*]—In China, when an emperor dies, all his women are removed to an edifice called 'the palace of chastity,' situated within the walls of the palace, in which they are shut up for the remainder of their lives.—*Macartney*, p. 375.

9. *Joab took Amasa by the beard—to kiss him.*]—Thevenot informs us, that among the Turks it is a great affront to take a man by the beard, unless it be to kiss him, in which case they often do it. Whether he means by kissing 'him,' kissing his 'beard,' is not certain; but 'Joab's taking Amasa by the beard to kiss him,' seems designed to express his taking his beard to kiss it; at least, this is agreeable to the customs of those who now live in that country; for d'Arvieux, describing the assembling together of several petty Arab princes at an entertainment, tells us, that all the emirs came together a little time after, accompanied by their friends and attendants; and, after the usual civilities, caressing, 'kissings of the beard,' and of the hand, which every one gave and received, according to his rank and dignity, they sat down upon mats. He elsewhere speaks of the women's kissing their husband's beards, and children those of their fathers, and reciprocally saluting each other in this manner; but the observance of this custom by the emirs accounts for the peculiar conduct of Joab, and serves to illustrate the story of this horrid assassination.—See *Harmer*.

10—13. *He smote him, &c.*]—This action was attended with the highest perfidy, barbarity, and insolence. Many reasons concurred to prevent David's calling Joab to account for it now, particularly his power, authority, and interest with the army: but it is evident that he never forgot, nor forgave him. That he highly resented it we find in his last charge to Solomon, where he gives it in charge to his son, to do justice on that bloody assassin. He himself was not at present in a capacity to do it. Joab was too powerful for a subject. After Absalom's death, he had the insolence to tell the king with an oath, that he would make every one of his subjects desert him; and after this assassination of Amasa, he resumed, contrary to his master's will, the command of all the forces, because he had restored peace to the land by quelling the insurrection of Sheba. Joab's being continued captain-general of all the forces, was not from David's inclination, but contrary to it, and by force.—*Dr. Chandler.*

14. *Unto Abel, and to Beth-maachah.*]—Rather, 'unto Abeth-maachah;' for it appears from the next verse, that it was but one and the same place. Josephus says it was a well-fortified city, belonging to the tribe of Naphtali, in the northern part of Judea.—See, also, *Relandi Palæstin.* p. 519, 520.

18. *They were wont to speak in old time, saying, &c.*]—'This old saying has much puzzled interpreters, and has been variously paraphrased.' Such is the remark of Dr. Geddes, who renders the text thus: 'There is an old saying, 'Make first some inquiry, and then act accordingly.' See the marginal reading.

CHAP. XXI. VER. 8. *Whom she brought up for Adriel, &c.*]—This Adriel did not marry Michal, Saul's younger daughter, but Merab, as appears from 1 Sam. xviii. 19. All interpreters agree, therefore, that the five sons mentioned in this verse must have been Merab's children, and not Michal's. The English translators, perceiving the inconsistency of this passage with the text just referred to, read, 'whom she brought up for Adriel;' but the Hebrew word is לָדָה, 'to bring forth, or bear.' The Septuagint also has *ετεκε*, and the Vulgate 'peperit,' both which words unequivocally mean the same. It is probable, therefore, says Dr. Wall, that some Hebrew scribe made a mistake, and wrote Michal for Merab, which the ancient versions copied. Here is an example, says Dr. Geddes, of evident, though early corruption, not only in the text, but in all the most ancient versions, which have Michal, instead of Merab.

10. *The field.*]—After 'field,' Dr. Geddes supplies, 'to invade them.'

17. *Sware unto him.*]—That is, not unto Abishai, but unto David.

17. *The light of Israel.*]—A good king is sometimes called in Scripture language a 'light,' or 'lamp,' to his people. Compare 1 Kings xi. 36; and Ps. cxxxii. 17.

19. *Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, &c.*]—In 1 Chron. xx. 5, it is 'Elhanan, the son of Jair, slew Lahmi the brother of Goliath,' which renders the text plain and consistent.

CHAP. XXII. VER. 1. *David spake unto the Lord the words of this song.*]—The reader will observe, that the following 'song,' as it is called, is nearly the same as the 18th Psalm.

On this divine Ode, Dr. Kennicott justly observes, that it contains the noblest imagery that was ever expressed in words. Overflowing with gratitude to God, for delivering him from his numerous and powerful enemies, David pours forth his soul in the strongest expressions of his own misery, and of God's majesty. Distress, danger, death, had every way surrounded him. He supplicated God, and that so earnestly, that his voice ascended to heaven, and his cry entered the ears of the Almighty. Then, the earth shook, the foundations of the hills trembled; for God was wroth. He bowed the heavens, he came down; darkness was under his feet. He rode, he flew upon the cherubim; he flew swiftly upon the wings of the wind. Darkness was as yet his pavilion; waters surrounded, and clouds concealed his glory! but the brightness of his presence soon scattered the clouds; they removed, they kindled into coals of fire! the blaze of glory burst forth, and the whole universe was in flames!—See Dissert. p. 466.

5. *The waves of death.*]—Afflictions, dangers, and sorrows, in the poetical parts of the Holy Scriptures, are represented by waves, floods, and storms. Nearly in the same sense, our great dramatic poet has 'a sea of troubles.' See verse 17.

6. *Snares of death.*]—This is an allusion to the ancient manner of hunting, which is still practised in some countries. It was performed by surrounding a considerable tract of ground with nets, and afterwards contracting the circle by degrees, till the hunters had forced all the beasts of that quarter together into a narrow compass, and then it was that the slaughter began. This manner of hunting was anciently practised in Italy, as well as all over the eastern parts of the world. See Virgil, *Æn.* iv. v. 121—131. It was from this custom, that the poets sometimes represented Death as surrounding persons with his nets, and as encompassing them on every side. Thus, Statius, lib. v. Sylv. i. l. 156.

— Furvæ miserum circum undique lethi
Vallavere plagæ.

See *Spence's Polymetis*, Dial. xvi. p. 262; *Dr. Shaw's Travels*, p. 235; *Horace*, lib. iii. ode 28, and *Psalm xviii.* 5.

The English reader should be told, that the classical meaning of 'prevented me,' is 'went before me.' Dr. Geddes's translation is, 'the snares of death were laid for me.' In the former part of this verse, for 'sorrows' we may read 'cords,' or 'bands.' The two lines form one of those parallelisms, which Bp. Lowth has pointed out, and with which the Hebrew poetry abounds.

11. *He rode upon a cherub.*]—To ride, says Bp. Patrick, signifies in Hebrew to rule with absolute authority. The sense, therefore, is, that he sent his heavenly ministers to execute his pleasure.

19. *They prevented me, &c.*]—Rather, as Dr. Geddes renders it, 'in the day of my distress they surprised me.' In the original, the word which we translate 'stay,' signifies 'the staff' on which aged men lean for support.

20. *He brought me forth also into a large place.*]—This may allude to his escape from Saul's officers by means of his wife, when he went to Samuel at Ramah. See 1 Sam. xix. 11—18. Or it may be a metaphorical expression, signifying that he was rescued from danger, and restored to such a state of liberty, as rendered it impossible for his enemy to encompass him with snares. Compare ver. 6.

21. *The cleanness of my hands.*]—Exterior purity has been used as a figure, in all languages, to denote the purity of the mind; and, as the hands are the chief instruments of power in man, we need not wonder that 'clean hands' should be a phrase adopted to signify innocence, or exemption from guilt.

27. *Thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.*]—In the parallel passage, it is, 'with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward.' See *Psalm xviii.* 26. This and some of the preceding epithets ascribed to God may appear harsh and indecorous according to our ideas; but in the Hebrew they mean nothing more, than that God treats mortals according to their merit, or demerit, in his sight. In this, and similar passages, it is very difficult to find proper terms in modern languages to express the original.

30. *By my God have I leaped over a wall.*]—A wall is one of the principal means of confinement and restraint. The general sense, therefore, of this expression is, that he had been enabled, by the blessing of God, to surmount difficulties and impediments, which otherwise would have been impossible.

31. *His way is perfect.*]—By 'his way,' in this and similar texts, we are to understand that perfect law of justice and of truth, by which the dispensations of God's providence are ad-

ministered to man. In the thirty-third verse the same word signifies the rule of human conduct.

31. *The word of the Lord is tried.*]—This is a very common metaphor in the Holy Scriptures. It is taken from the art of proving the precious metals, and refining them from dross by fire.

34. *He maketh my feet like hinds' feet.*]—In these few words there is an allusion both to the remarkable swiftness of the animal here mentioned, and to the peculiar firmness and safety, with which it seems to tread the ground.—See *Bochart's Hieroz.*

34. *Setteth me upon my high places.*]—The word 'my' would have been better omitted here, as it is in the Septuagint. Warriors have always considered 'high places,' not only as places of safety, but as stations peculiarly favorable for annoying the enemy. Such expressions, therefore, may be taken, metaphorically, for a state of power, security, and protection.

35. *So that a bow of steel is broken by mine arms.*]—This is scarcely intelligible. Dr. Geddes, after the Syriac, the Arabic, and Vulgate, renders it, 'and maketh my arms like a bow of brass.' Coverdale's version is different from both; 'He teacheth my hands to fight, and bendeth the steel-bow with mine arms,' which seems the most intelligible and the best.

37. *Thou hast enlarged my steps, &c.*]—A metaphorical expression, denoting increase of confidence, liberty, and power. By the mercies of God, he had been taught to take wider steps, without danger of slipping, or falling. 'Walking,' in Scripture language, is conduct; and 'steps' are the particular actions which serve to form it.

43. *As small as the dust of the earth.*]—The simile in the 18th Psalm is, 'as the dust before the wind.' These and similar expressions may serve to shew the strong, hyperbolical language of oriental poetry.

46. *Strangers shall fade away, &c.*]—By 'strangers,' it is probable, the remains of the Canaanitish nation are meant. Instead of 'fade away,' the Hebrew word may signify they shall run away as water does on a descent, or through an aperture from a vessel. Dr. Geddes's translation of this verse is, 'foreign nations shrink with fear, and tremble from their fastnesses.'

CHAP. XXIII. VER. 1. *These be the last words of David.*]—We are not to understand this in a strictly literal sense. All that the inspired writer means, probably, is, that they form a supplementary part, conclusion, or 'last words,' to the beautiful

and sublime hymn, which he had just recorded in the last chapter.

1. *The sweet psalmist of Israel.*]—‘He, who harmonized the psalmody of Israel.’—*Dr. Geddes.*

4. *As the light of the morning, when the sun, &c.*]—Taking the sun to be an image, or character of ‘the just,’ in the last verse, says Bp. Sherlock, the sense will be, ‘The sun shall be like the kind, gentle light of the morning, free from clouds, and when the earth, refreshed by kindly showers, is putting forth fresh verdure.’ The passage is beautiful, and gives an idea of a sun that never scorches, but is ever gentle, and shining with a genial heat: ‘a sun with healing under his wings.’

Dr. Kennicott, in the first volume of his Dissertation, has confirmed this conjecture of the bishop’s. There is a remarkable variation in an old MS., he observes, which seems to determine this hymn to have been a prophecy of the Messiah. It is this, ‘And, as the morning-light, shall Jehovah, the sun, arise.’

5. *For this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.*]—Lud. de Dieu seems to have given the true sense of this passage. David, says he, amplifies the stability and perpetuity of his kingdom, by comparing it to three natural things, which are grateful to man, but not remarkable for their constancy: for the sun rises, but also sets; the morning may be clear, and yet clouds may soon after intervene; the tender grass springs up, but it often withers away. Not so, says the inspired psalmist, is my kingdom before the Almighty. It flourishes like these, but is at the same time perpetual: for the Holy One of Israel hath made an everlasting covenant with me; and though afflictions have befallen me, yet he hath not taken his mercies, nor his favors from me. Dr. Geddes’s translation of verses 4 and 5 is to the same effect:

‘Not like the grass of the earth, (which,
When the morning sun riseth clear and cloudless,
Glistereth from the previous rain)
Shall be my house before God.

For with me he hath made a perpetual covenant,’ &c.

6. *But the sons of Belial, &c.*]—‘Whereas lawless men, all of them, are like briars to be thrust out, (for with the hand they may not be taken; but the man, who would meddle with them, must be provided with an axe and spear-shaft) and to be burned on the spot with fire.’—*Dr. Geddes.*

8. *These be the names of the mighty men, &c.*]—The parallel

list of David's 'worthies,' as they are called, 1 Chron. xi, originally contained the same names, we may suppose, that are here given, and where it is now contradictory, one of the two places, says Dr. Kennicott, must have been corrupted. A comparison of the two chapters will convince every reader of the carelessness and ignorance of the Jewish scribes, more particularly in copying names, and in recording numbers.

The list consists of thirty-seven warriors, the first of whom is Joab, who, though not expressly mentioned here, because perhaps he had been celebrated through this whole book of Samuel, must yet be included, in order to complete the number. See verse 39. The author of the Chronicles mentions Joab first, and he may well be considered as the commander in chief. We then have a double series of three generals. The first contains the names of Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah, who were next in rank and honor, we may suppose, to Joab. The second series consists of Abishai, Benai, and Asahel, who were next in the scale of military rank; and then the general body of thirty. See ver. 18—22. The eighth verse appears to be very much corrupted: but Dr. Kennicott has, with great industry and learning, endeavoured to correct the original, and offers the following translation instead of the present text. 'These are the names of the mighty men whom David had. Jashobeam, the Hachmonite, chief of three: he lifted up his spear against three hundred soldiers at one time.' This is nearly the same as 1 Chron. xi. 11. The number 'three hundred' is substituted for 'eight hundred,' from the parallel text in Chronicles, and the mistake of the transcriber in this passage might have been owing to some of those causes, which have been so often mentioned. See note on Num. i. 46. The Hebrew word ללח, which our translators render, 'whom he slew,' appears to be a substantive, not a verb, and, by a common analogy of language, signifies 'a killer,' or 'a person accustomed to slay,' instead of 'the slain.' Accordingly, the Vatican edition of the Septuagint renders the Hebrew word by ΣΤΡΑΤΙΩΤΑΣ; i. e. 'soldiers.' An old English MS. so early as 1408, is to the same effect nearly; 'This reisede his shafte (spere) on thre hundrid woundid men in one tyme.'—See *Kennicott*, vol. i. p. 102—126; and *Castelli Lexic. Heptaglot.* on ללח.

9. *The son of Dodo.*—It should be Dodi, and after 'the three mighty men,' add, '*he was with David at Pasdammim.*'

11. *And the Philistines were gathered together into a troop, &c.*—It should be, 'The Philistines were gathered together at Lehi, where was a piece of ground full of barley.'

13. *To David in the harvest-time.*]—It should be, ‘Over the rock to David,’ &c.

15, 16. *Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, &c.*]—The Jewish commentators observe, that though David expressed a desire for some of the water of Beth-lehem, because it was the place of his nativity, and the water was probably excellent in its kind, yet he did not do this with an intent that any one should make so desperate an attempt.—*Abarbanel.*

20. *And Benaiah.*]—It should be Benaihu; and for ‘lion-like men,’ read, ‘men who were stronger and fiercer than lions.’

24. *Was one of the thirty.*]—Rather, ‘was also above the thirty.’

25. *Shammah the Harodite.*]—It should be, ‘Shamhoth the Harodite.’

27. *Mebunnai.*]—Instead of Mebunnai, it should be ‘Sibbecai.’

28. *Zalmon.*]—For Zalmon, read ‘Ilai.’

30. *Hiddai.*]—For Hiddai, read ‘Hurai,’ and, in the next verse, for Barhumite, read ‘Bahurimite.’

32. *Of the sons of Jashen, &c.*]—Rather, ‘Gouni of the sons of Hashem, and Jonathan, the son of Shammah.’

36. *Igal the son of Nathan.*]—This verse should be, ‘Naarai the son of Azbai, Joal the brother of Nathan of Tzobah.’ The emendations in this chapter are very numerous, of which the most material have been given, as proposed by Dr. Kennicott in his excellent Dissertation, from an elaborate correction of the Hebrew text, and a diligent collation of this chapter with 1 Chron. xi.

CHAP. XXIV. VER. 1. *And he moved David against them.*]—In the original, there is no nominative case, though the pronoun ‘he,’ in connection with the verb, must refer to ‘the Lord:’ but it is said, 1 Chron. xxi. 1, that ‘Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.’ There is no reason, however, to suppose, that by ‘Satan’ we are to understand the Great apostate Spirit; the Hebrew word implies ‘an adversary,’ any wicked person or spirit in general; and therefore this pernicious advice may have been given to David by some evil minister, or suggested by some sinful and presumptuous passion in his own breast. See the next note.

2. *And number ye the people, that I may know the number of the people.*]—This action of David’s might have been culpable on the following accounts: 1. As it was an argument of his pride and ambition; and the punishment by the con-

suming pestilence, which diminished the numbered, carried in it the mark of the sin of boasting with respect to the great number of his people. 2. Sacrilege is another sin that is said to have attended on this action. Josephus, in recording it, tells us, that David forgot the precept of Moses; who, on numbering the people, required the payment of the half-shekel, which was for the use of the sanctuary, and was required by Moses under the penalty of a plague, Exodus xxx. 12. 'When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel after their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them when thou numberest them.' David takes the numbers, but we hear nothing of this appointed offering to God; and no wonder that the threatened plague should succeed. 3. Another fault of David's is thought to be this, that he numbered those who were under the age of twenty years, and pried farther into the number of Israel than the divine law permitted him.

The Israelites were numbered three times in the wilderness, but care was taken that they should be numbered only from twenty years old and upwards. Whenever their number was taken, it was expressly provided in the law of Moses, that they should not be numbered under that age; because the Lord had said he would increase Israel like the stars of heaven.—See *Bp. Kidder*.

Michaelis thinks that this census was ordered by David, for the purpose of enrolling all his subjects, who were capable of bearing arms, for military service, and that his ultimate view was to form a standing army. His sin, therefore, was the desire of conquest, bloodshed, tyranny and despotism. Vid. Comment. vol. iii. p. 22, 23.

9. *And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people, &c.*—The amount given in this account is widely different from that in the Chronicles. In the latter, the men of Israel are said to be eleven hundred thousand, and the men of Judah four hundred and seventy thousand. To reconcile these two accounts, it has been observed, that when, in this passage, the number of men of the Israelites are said to be 'eight hundred thousand,' the troops that were embodied were not reckoned, their numbers being well known. We find, 1 Chron. xxvii. 1, &c. that these legions were divided into twelve companies, one of which waited each month, and that each of these companies amounted to twenty-four thousand. Allowing to each body a thousand officers, the deficiency in this account in the book of Samuel is exactly supplied. To account for the dis-

parity in the numbers of the tribe of Judah, some have supposed the tribe of Benjamin to be included in one account, and omitted in the other. Others are of opinion, that the legionary soldiers of the tribe of Judah make the difference, being included in one, and not noticed in the other. It is much more probable, that the numerals had been misinterpreted, or incorrectly written by the copyist. See note on Numb. i. 46.

The editor of Calmet's Dictionary has endeavoured to reconcile the two parallel places of Scripture in a different way. 'It appears from Chronicles,' he observes, 'that there were twelve divisions of generals, who commanded monthly, and whose duty was to keep guard near the king's person, each having a body of troops consisting of twenty-four thousand men, which, jointly, formed a grand army of two hundred and eighty-eight thousand; and, as a separate body of twelve thousand men naturally attended on the twelve princes of the twelve tribes, mentioned in the same chapter, the whole will be three hundred thousand; which is the difference between the two accounts of eight hundred thousand, and of one million one hundred thousand. (Vide *Alichot Holam*, p. 181.) Whence may be deduced this natural solution, as to the number of Israel. As to the men of Israel, the author of the book of Samuel does not take notice of the three hundred thousand, because they were in the actual service of the king, as a standing army, and therefore there was no need to number them; but the author of the book of Chronicles joins them to the rest, saying expressly, כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, 'all those of Israel were one million one hundred thousand;' whereas the author of Samuel, who reckons, only the eight hundred thousand, does not say, כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, 'all those of Israel,' but barely, וְתַהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, 'and Israel were,' &c. It must also be observed, that, exclusively of the troops beforementioned, there was an army of observation on the frontiers of the Philistines' country, composed of thirty thousand men, as appears from 2 Sam. vi. 1, which, it seems, were included in the number of five hundred thousand of the people of Judah, by the author of the book of Samuel; but the author of Chronicles, who mentions only four hundred and seventy thousand, gives the number of that tribe exclusively of those thirty thousand men; because they were not all of the tribe of Judah, and therefore he does not say, כָּל יְהוּדָה, 'all those of Judah,' as he had said, כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, 'all those of Israel,' but only וַיְהוּדָה, 'and those of Judah.' Thus, both accounts may be

reconciled, by only having recourse to other parts of Scripture, treating on the same subject, which will ever be found the best method of explaining difficult passages.

13. *Shall seven years of famine, &c.*]—The proposal, 1 Chron. xxi. 12, is ‘Three years famine, three months to be destroyed before thy foes, or else three days’ pestilence.’ So also the Septuagint. But Josephus has ‘seven years,’ as in our present text.

16. *The angel of the Lord.*]—There is nothing that requires notice here, except the phraseology, or peculiar mode of expression. A pestilence is certainly a very common and natural means of producing death: but the Hebrews, who had no conception of the occult causes of disease, nor of many effects, which are now said to be produced by the laws of nature, piously attributed every thing, that was not an object of the senses, or of which they could not assign the cause, to the interposition of God. And, on all extraordinary occasions, the Almighty was supposed to depart from the usual administration of his providence, and to inflict punishments, or cause destruction, by the agency of a being, who in Scripture is often called ‘the angel of the Lord.’ This is how the pestilence was said to be produced in the particular instance under our consideration. The classical reader will scarcely fail to recollect, that, in Homer, the pestilence which destroyed the Greeks, was said to have been inflicted by the arrows of Apollo: but the representations of the Holy Scriptures are infinitely more sublime, where the elements of nature, and the great physical causes arising from their various combinations, are occasionally considered as angels and messengers of God, or as invisible spirits sent to ‘fulfil his word.’ See note on John v. 4.

18. *Threshing-floor.*]—These, among the ancient Jews, were only round, level plats of ground in the open air, as they are to this day in the east, resembling the ‘Libycæ aræ’ of Horace, ode i. l. 10, where the corn was trodden out by oxen. Thus Gideon’s floor (Judges vi. 37.) appears to have been in the open air; as was likewise that of Araunah, the Jebusite; else it would not have been a proper place for erecting an altar and for offering sacrifice. In Hosea xiii. 3, we read of ‘the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind’ from the floor. This circumstance of the threshing-floor’s being exposed to the agitation of the wind, seems to be the principal reason of its Hebrew name; which may be farther illustrated by the direction which Hesiod (*Opera et Dies*, l. 597.) gives his husbandman, ‘to thresh his corn in a place well exposed to the wind.’ From

the above account, it appears, that a 'threshing-floor,' rendered in our translation a 'void place,' might well be near the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and that it might afford no improper place for the kings of Israel and Judah to hear the prophets in. See 1 Kings xxii. 10; 2 Chron. xviii. 9. *Burder's Orient. Cust.* vol. i. p. 74.

24. *So David bought the threshing-floor, and the oxen, for fifty shekels of silver.*—It is said, 1 Chron. xxi. 25, that David gave for the place 'six hundred shekels of gold,' which, according to the calculation of Bp. Cumberland, and others, is more than a hundred times the value of fifty shekels of silver. In order to reconcile these two texts, some commentators imagine, that the price of the threshing-floor is not here specified, and that the fifty shekels of silver were given for the oxen only. See *Jewish Coins, &c.* in *Prolegom.*

Others are of opinion, that the fifty shekels of silver were paid for the threshing-floor and the oxen; but that the six hundred shekels of gold, mentioned in Chronicles, were given for all Araunah's estate; or perhaps for the whole of that celebrated mount Moriah, where Abraham offered to sacrifice his son Isaac, and on which Solomon afterwards built the holy temple.

I. K I N G S.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS and the following Book were, in the Hebrew canon, reckoned as one. They cannot be positively assigned to any particular author, though some have ascribed them to Jeremiah, and some to Isaiah. There are many, likewise, who contend that they are the production of Ezra; and this opinion seems to be the most probable, for they appear to be a collection, or historical abridgment, selected from the memoirs and books of the prophets; which are here frequently referred to, as records, doubtless, of contemporary writers. Thus, 'the Book of the Acts of Solomon' is mentioned in this very book, and was probably composed by Nathan, Ahijah the Shilonite, and Iddo the seer. Hence, those who, by 'the Book of the Acts of Solomon,' understand 'the Books of Kings,' suppose that they were compiled by these prophets; but we elsewhere read, that Shemaiah the prophet was employed with Iddo the seer, in writing the acts of Rehoboam; and that the acts of Abijah were written in the story of Iddo. The book of Jehu, the prophet, likewise related the acts of King Jehoshaphat; and Isaiah wrote the acts of Uzziah, of Hezekiah, and probably of the two intermediate kings, Jotham and Ahaz, in whose reigns he flourished.

It is probable, therefore, that the Books of Kings were compiled from these several records, as well as from other authentic documents. They appear to have been arranged

by one person, as the style and manner are uniform; and therefore they have been assigned to Ezra, who possibly compiled them during the captivity; for the Chaldaic names, by which the months in these books are denominated, were not used by the Jews till in, or after the captivity. See *The Calendar of the Jews*, in *Prolegom.* p. 64.

The first Book comprises a period of 126 years, from the death of David, A. M. 2989, to that of Jehoshaphat. After the description of the decay and death of David, we are presented with a most striking history of the reign of Solomon; of his wisdom and magnificence; of the building of the temple; of his extended commerce to Ophir; and of the visit of the queen of Sheba. To this succeeds an account of the miserable dotage and apostacy of Solomon, and of his death, preceded by a prospect of that threatened 'rending of the kingdom,' which was to take place under his son.

Afterwards are related the accession of Rehoboam; his rash and impolitic conduct; and the consequent separation of the ten tribes, which happened about A. M. 3029. This is followed by a concise sketch of the history of the two kingdoms, in which particular periods are characterised by very animated relations; as that of the disobedient prophet; of the widow of Zarephath; of Elijah and the prophets of Baal; of Benhadad's pride and defeat; of Ahab's injustice and punishment. In the course of these events, we contemplate the exact accomplishment of God's promises and threats; the wisdom of his dispensations, and the mingled justice and mercies of his government.

Of the prophecies which this Book contains, some were speedily completed; but that which foretold that 'Josiah should be born unto the house of David, and slay the high-priests,' was not fulfilled till above three hundred and fifty years after it was delivered. Some of its prophetic denunciations were uttered under figurative descriptions; and Micaiah, to illustrate the infatuation, which God had suffered to pre-

vail in the counsels of Ahaz, that it might mislead him to destruction, unfolds to the misguided monarch the danger of his projected enterprise, under a representation received in vision; in which an imaginary council, and the supposed agency of a lying spirit, are introduced, in order to explain the divine conduct in some analogous proceedings. Both the Books of Kings are cited as authentic and canonical by our Saviour and his apostles.—*Dr. Gray.*

CHAPTER I.

VER. 2. *His servants.*—Josephus says, ‘his physicians.’

3. *A Shunammite.*—So called from the city Shunem, or Shulem, to which she belonged. It was situated on the border of the tribe of Issachar. See Josh. xix. 18. This city was also remarkable for the Shunammite woman, who was so kind and hospitable to the prophet Elisha.

6. *And his father had not displeased him at any time, &c.*—One of David’s greatest faults, and the source of many of his calamities, appears to have been an excessive indulgence to his children, arising from a degree of affection, which made him blind and foolish. Houbigant’s translation of the latter part of this verse is, ‘and he was begotten by David after Absalom;’ which appears to be right: for Maacah, not Haggith, was Absalom’s mother. See 2 Sam. iii. 3.

33. *Cause Solomon, my son, to ride upon mine own mule, and bring him down to Gihon.*—Maimonides informs us, that it was a capital offence for any one to ride the king’s mule, to sit on his throne, or to handle his sceptre, without permission; but when this was granted, it was considered as one of the most honorable distinctions that could be conferred on a subject.

Gihon was a small brook near Jerusalem, and is called in the Chaldee, ‘Siloa,’ which is its more modern name. At this place, where the people were accustomed to resort in great numbers, without the walls of Jerusalem, Zadok and Nathan anointed Solomon king. The Jewish Rabbis inform us, that one of them poured out the oil, while the other anointed his head, drawing a circle round it with oil; which was intended to express the form of the diadem, and, perhaps, the per-

petuity of the royal dignity. This ceremony, which was first instituted at Solomon's coronation, was afterwards adopted in crowning the subsequent kings of David's family.

50. *And caught hold on the horns of the altar.*—Adonijah seems, in his fear, to have gone to the altar, as to a place of refuge; though we do not find it recognised as such in the laws of Moses. It is not certain to what altar he fled; but, as David had built a place for the reception of the ark on mount Zion, and had also erected an altar there for offering the daily sacrifices on, Le Clerc thinks it probable, that this was the altar to which Adonijah fled for protection. See chap. ii. 28.

CHAP. II. VER. 4. *Continue his word.*—‘Confirm his promise.’—*Dr. Geddes.*

9. *Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.*—David is here represented as ending his life with commanding Solomon to put Shimei to death; and, on account of that very crime, for which he had sworn to him, by the Lord, that he would not put him to death. The conduct thus imputed to the expiring monarch should be examined very carefully, as to the ground on which it rests. When the passage is duly considered, it will appear highly probable, that an injury has been done to this illustrious character. It is not uncommon in the Hebrew language to omit the negative in a second part of a sentence, and to consider it as repeated, when it has been once expressed, and is followed by the connecting particle.

The necessity of so very considerable an alteration, as inserting the particle NOT, may be here confirmed by some other instances. Thus, Psalm i. 5. ‘The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, NOR (the Hebrew is ‘and,’ signifying ‘and not’) sinners in the congregation of the righteous.’ (See, also, Psalm ix. 18; xxxviii. 1; lxxv. 5; and Prov. xxiv. 12.) If then there are many such instances, the question is, whether the negative here expressed in the former part of David's command, may not be understood as to be repeated in the latter part; and if this *may* be, a strong reason will be added why it *should* be so interpreted. The passage will then run thus: ‘Behold, thou hast with thee Shimei, who cursed me; but I swear to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death by the sword. Now, therefore, hold him NOT guiltless, (for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him) but bring NOT down his hoary head to the grave with blood.’ Now, if the language itself will admit of this

construction, the sense thus given to the passage derives a very strong support from the context. For how did Solomon understand this charge? Did he kill Shimei in consequence of it? Certainly not. For, after he had commanded Joab to be slain, in obedience to his father, he sends for Shimei, and, knowing that Shimei ought to be well watched, confines him to a particular spot in Jerusalem for the remainder of his life, ver. 36—42. See *Dr. Kennicott's Remarks*, p. 131.

It does not seem necessary, as Dr. Kennicott supposes, that the negative in the first part of the sentence should be followed by *any* 'connecting particle.' In addition to the texts already referred to, see Judges v. 30; 1 Sam. ii. 3; and Prov. v. 16.

Dr. Delaney has given the same interpretation of this verse.

23. *Then king Solomon swore by the Lord, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life.*—Solomon considered it as a treasonable request, that Adonijah should desire to have a woman 'to wife,' who had shared the royal bed of his father. For, according to the custom of the Hebrews, no man who had been the servant of the king, might serve any other master; nor might any man ride the king's horse, or sit on his throne, or use his sceptre; much less might any private person marry the king's widow, who belonged only to his successor. Thus, 'God gave David all the wives of Saul.' 2 Sam. xii. 8. See *Selden*, de Uxor. Heb. lib. i. cap. 10.

The whole Haram of an eastern monarch was a part of the regal succession; and it was treason for a subject to claim any wife, or virgin, who had once formed a part of it. 'Besides,' says Dr. Geddes, 'the king himself might have been in love with Abishag,' and it is probable, that she was the Shulam-mite of his song, mentioned Cant. chap. vi. 13

25. *Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah.*—When the enemies of a certain great man in Turkey, or Persia, have gained influence enough over the prince, to procure a warrant for his death, a 'capidgi' (the name of the officer who executes these orders) is sent to him, who shews him the order which he has received to carry back his head. The other takes the grand Signior's order, kisses it, puts it on his head, in sign of respect, and then, after performing his ablution and saying prayers, he freely gives up his head. The capidgi having strangled him, (or caused servants whom he brought purposely with him to do it) cuts off his head, and carries it to Constantinople. Thus, they blindly obey the grand Signior's order; and the servants never offer to hinder the executioner, though these capidgis come very often with few or no attendants.

Sir John Chardin gives a similar account of the silent, hasty, and unobstructed manner of putting the great men of Persia to death. Much the same method, it seems, was used by the ancient Jewish princes. Benaiah was the capidgi, to use the modern Turkish term, who was sent by Solomon to put Adonijah, a prince of the blood, to death; and Joab was the commander in chief. A capidgi, in like manner, beheaded John the Baptist in prison, and carried his head away with him to the court of Herod the Tetrarch. So a capidgi was sent to take off the head of the prophet Elisha, by king Jehoram; but the executioner was prevented, by the king's immediately following, and receiving a prophetic assurance, that the famine, which then distressed the city, would terminate in four and twenty hours.

26. *Get thee to Anathoth, unto thine own fields.*]—This was no more than a banishment into the possession belonging to him as a priest; by which indeed he was hindered from executing the high priest's office, (which could only be performed at the temple) but it could not deprive him of the priesthood: and if he had forfeited his life for treason, it was a merciful kindness to change it into banishment, and shewed the great respect which Solomon had for God's priest. Anathoth belonged to him as a priest, which he could not have enjoyed, if he had been deprived of his sacred office. See note on ver. 9.—*Bp. Wilson.*

CHAP. III. VER. 1. *Took Pharaoh's daughter.*]—The commentators gravely inform us, that this was contrary to the law of Moses, unless she were first made a proselyte to the Jewish religion; without considering that men in power, from the time of Joshua, had repeatedly violated the institutions of their great prophet and legislator with impunity; but, of all the Jewish kings, no one seems to have determined more fully 'to do that which seemed right in his own eyes' than Solomon.

7. *I know not how to go out or come in.*]—This phrase, which occurs so often in the Bible, seems here to mean an inability, for want of experience, to conduct the affairs of the kingdom either in time of war, or peace. See Numb. xxvii. 17.

7. *I am but a little child.*]—Compare Jer. i. 6.

11. *To discern judgment.*]—'To administer justice.'

16. *Then came there two women, &c.*]—Expedients somewhat similar, for discovering truth and administering justice, occur in heathen writers. Diodorus Siculus informs us, that Ario Pharnes, king of Thrace, when called on to arbitrate between three men, who said they were the sons of the king of Cimmericus, and claimed the succession, discovered the right heir by ordering each of them to shoot an arrow at the dead king's

body. Two of them shewed their readiness to obey; but his real son refused. Suetonius, also, (in Vit. Claud.) says, that the emperor discovered a woman to be the real mother of a young man, whom she would not own, by commanding her to marry him. The evidence, which was doubtful before, now became decisive; and, shocked at the idea of committing incest, she confessed the truth.

28. *Feared the king.*]—Rather, ‘revered the king.’

CHAP. IV. VER. 7. *And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel, which provided victuals, &c.*]—These are doubtless to be considered as his general receivers; for ‘the revenues of princes in the east are paid in the fruits and productions of the earth; there are no other taxes on the peasants.’—*Sir J. Chardin.*

The proper names of five of these officers have been lost; and it must have been at an early period, because they are not to be found in any of the ancient versions. All that the present Hebrew text informs us is, that the first was the son of Hur, the second the son of Dekar, the third the son of Hesus, the fourth the son of Abinadab, and the fifth the son of Geber.

22. *Thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal.*]—In the original, it is, ‘thirty Cori of fine flour,’ &c. See Proleg. p. 56. It has been computed that this quantity of flour would make bread sufficient for thirty-three thousand persons. There might have been some mistake in the numerals.

25. *Every man under his vine and under his fig-tree.*]—A metaphorical expression denoting peace and plenty, security and happiness. The Jews are said to have cultivated the fig-tree and the vine more than any other, not only on account of the fruit of those trees, but for the pleasantness and convenience of their shade.

26. *Forty thousand stalls.*]—In 2 Chron. ix. 25, it is said, that he had only ‘four thousand stalls.’ The less number is certainly to be preferred, and the greater was introduced into the text, we may suppose, owing to some of those causes of error mentioned in the note on Num. i. 46.

32. *His songs were a thousand and five.*]—The Septuagint reads ‘five thousand.’ This is a remarkable instance of the change of numbers, produced by the insertion, or omission, of the *vau*. In the copy, which the Greek translators used, the *vau* appears to have been omitted, and in our present Hebrew Bible it is inserted, which makes all the difference. See note on Numb. i. 46.

33. *From the cedar—unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall.*]—We learn from this passage, that whatever might be

'the gift of wisdom bestowed on Solomon from on high,' he cultivated it by the most assiduous study. It appears, that he collected the observations of others, and remarked also for himself whatever natural principles, and natural occurrences, came within his reach. We see, also, that he treated them systematically, placing first, among trees, the cedar, and ending with, it is likely, some kind of moss, or other minute plant, which grows on walls. Solomon also places botany before natural history, which latter he arranged into, 1. Great beasts, quadrupeds. 2. Birds. 3. Reptiles, whatever creeps along the ground; and 4. Fishes, whatever inhabits the waters. We have seen, Deut. iv. 17, 18. that the same order of natural history seems to have been observed by Moses. Is it not possible that the principles, and, perhaps, some works of Moses, on this subject, might have reached the time of Solomon, who here evidently follows him?

It is a curious inquiry whether any copies of these works of Solomon are still in being. Perhaps, when Alexander overran Asia, Aristotle might procure them, and might even make them the foundation of his own system of natural history. This is very consistent with the character of Aristotle, and is much more credible than the magical books, which abuse the name of Solomon, by claiming him as their author. It may be remarked, also, that an eminent naturalist is often quoted, and studied by others, who yet may vary in their systems from him; but then this can only be when his works have been published. Perhaps, Solomon having no need, did not publish his collections; or if he published them, they are totally lost, unless some parts of them are preserved in foreign languages.—Companion to the Bible, p. 101.

CHAP. V. VER. 11. *Twenty measures.*—The Septuagint, Syriac, and other ancient versions read 'Twenty thousand measures.' See, also, the Targum of Jonathan. The numeral for a thousand seems to have dropt out of the text; or, the word מֵאָה, 'thousand,' having been mentioned in the preceding clause, may be here understood. The specific measure in Hebrew is the Corus, which was equal to ten Ephahs, or Baths. See Marginal Reading, and Prolegom. p. 56.

15, 16. *Three-score and ten thousand, &c.*—The numbers in these verses appear enormous and disproportionate, particularly when the dimensions of the temple are considered. See note on Num. i. 46.

CHAP. VI. VER. 5. *He builded chambers round about.*—These chambers appear to have been what we should now call corridors, or galleries; in which there were apartments for the

priests. Here they deposited their sacred vestments, we may suppose, eat the portion allotted to them of the sacrifices, and slept.

6. *The nethermost chamber was five cubits.*]—It appears that these chambers, or galleries, consisted of three stories, and that they were five cubits high, see ver. 10. They increased one cubit in breadth every story, in consequence of the wall of the temple not being of the same thickness at the top, as it was near the foundation, but built narrower by means of three offsets, or gatherings, as builders call them, which served as rests for the beams of the galleries.

8. *The right side of the house.*]—This means the south side; for, unless the contrary is mentioned, the spectator is always supposed to look towards the east.

15. *And he builded the walls.*]—That is, he lined, or wainscoted the walls with cedar. There is some obscurity in this verse respecting the floor. We may suppose, from the former part, that it consisted of cedar planks; but we are told, in the latter, that it was covered with fir. The probable interpretation is, that beams of cedar, not being subject to decay, formed the foundation of the floor, and that the fir planks were used for the purpose of covering them. Dr. Geddes's translation is somewhat different. 'He lined the inside of the walls with cedar-wood from the floor up to the ceiling, and the floor of the house he covered with planks of fir.'

16. *And he builded twenty cubits on the side of the house.*]—This verse is not very intelligible in our present translation. Dr. Geddes's version of it and the following is: 'At the further end of the house, he lined twenty cubits, both floor and walls, with boards of cedar: this he constructed to be the inner oracle, the most holy place. Thus, forty cubits were left for the outer house, or temple.'

18. *With knops.*]—The Hebrew word פקעים, means 'colocynths,' or 'gourds,' and should have been so rendered here. See *Montanus*. The full-blown flowers of either of these plants must have been very ornamental. Such also might have been the meaning of the word in the description of the candlestick, *Exod. xxv. 31*.

19. *In the house within.*]—Rather, 'in the innermost part of the house, he built the most holy place, to receive the ark of God.' See ver. 16.

21. *A partition by the chains of gold, &c.*]—'Before the oracle, he made a partition-beam, with golden chains; which beam he overlaid with gold.'—*Dr. Geddes*.

29, 30. *Within and without.*]—This is badly rendered. It

should have been, after the Septuagint, 'both of the inner house,' meaning the holy of holies, and of 'the outer house,' or temple.

31. *The lintel and side-posts were a fifth part of the wall.*]—It is difficult to say what our translators understood by this. The words which they have supplied are, as usual, in Italics. The probable meaning is, that the doors at the entrance, including the lintel and the side-posts, occupied a portion of space equal to one-fifth part of the whole partition. Dr. Lightfoot says, vol. i. p. 1084, 'The post, which was the door-cheek, was at the fifth cubit;' meaning from either wall of the house. So, also, Dr. Waterland.

33. *A fourth part of the wall.*]—According to the interpretation given ver. 31, this grand entrance-door, with its framework, &c. occupied one-fourth of the breadth of the whole building.

38. *According to all the fashion of it.*]—That is, according to the original plan, or projected form.

CHAP. VII. VER. 2. *He builded also the house of the forest of Lebanon.*]—The house mentioned, ver. 1, was in Jerusalem, and appears to have been Solomon's winter residence. This was near Jerusalem, and called 'the house of the forest of Lebanon,' because, perhaps, it was built on an eminence, and surrounded with trees, which made it shady and cool, and of course a pleasant residence during the summer. Calmet is of opinion, that this house derived its peculiar name from the great number of cedar pillars which supported it, and which mount Lebanon supplied.

10. *Great stones; stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits.*]—We read, with some surprise, of the magnitude of these stones employed by Solomon, in the construction of his house; and their dimensions are undoubtedly set down as being remarkable. Ten cubits are seventeen feet and a half, reckoning the cubit at twenty-one inches; and eight cubits are fourteen feet. This has appeared extraordinary to many readers, since, among us, a stone of ten or twelve feet is considered a large stone: but let us hear M. Volney, and our surprise will no longer be fixed on these stones, but be transferred from Solomon's house to the ruins of Balbec.

'What is still more astonishing, he observes, is the enormous stones which compose the sloping wall. To the west, the second layer is formed of stones, which are from twenty-eight to thirty-five feet long, by about nine in height. Over this layer, at the north-west angle, there are three stones, which alone occupy a space of one hundred and seventy-five feet and one half; viz.

the first, fifty-eight feet seven inches; the second, fifty-eight feet eleven; and the third, exactly fifty-eight feet; and each of these is twelve feet thick. These stones are of a white granite, with large shining flakes, like gypsum; there is a quarry of this kind of stone under the whole city, and another in the adjacent mountains, which is open in several places. On the right, as we approach the city, there is still lying there a stone, hewn on three sides, which is sixty-nine feet two inches long, twelve feet ten inches broad, and thirteen feet three inches in thickness. By what means could the ancients move these enormous masses? This is, doubtless, a problem in mechanics, curious to resolve. *Volney's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 241.

15. *Eighteen cubits high apiece.*]—In 2 Chronicles, chap. iii. 15, it is said that these pillars were thirty-five cubits high. Tremellius reconciles this difference by observing, that the common cubit was but one half of the cubit of the sanctuary; so that eighteen of the one would make thirty-six of the other, from which if we deduct one cubit for the plinth, or base, there would remain thirty-five. It is probable that these pillars were erected only for ornament; as we do not find that they supported any building. Abarbanel thinks that Solomon erected them here as symbols of the pillar of the cloud, and the pillar of fire, which conducted the Israelites through the wilderness; Jachin representing the pillar of the cloud, and Boaz the pillar of fire.

17. *Seven for the one chapiter, and seven for the other.*]—The Septuagint has, 'and two nets of chequer-work for the chapiters; one for one chapiter, or capital, and one for the other,' which seems to be the true reading.

23. *And he made a molten sea.*]—This immense laver is called 'a sea' from its magnitude. At a moderate computation, it held about sixteen thousand gallons. Beside the great brasen sea, as it is called, there were in the temple ten lavers of a less size, of exquisite workmanship, which moved on wheels, and were ornamented with the figures of various animals. These, we may suppose, always had relation to the cherubim, and were thought to be most complete, when they contained the heads of a man, an ox, a lion, and an eagle. See ver. 38; and note on Ezek. i. 6.

24. *There were knops compassing it.*]—These formed a species of embossed work, and were probably in the form of the colocyath, or gourd. See note on chap. vi. 18.

27. *Ten bases of brass.*]—These highly ornamental bases appear to have been square stands, or immense pedestals, for the purpose of supporting the lavers.

28. *The ledges.*]—It is evident, that these bases, or pedestals, rose with steps, and that the ornaments mentioned in the next verse appeared in front, forming so many entablatures.

30. *Had undersetters.*]—It is probable, that these ‘undersetters,’ as they are called, were so many strong legs, somewhat shorter than the wheels, and were intended to prevent the laver from tilting, or falling, in case of any accident.

CHAP. VIII. VER. 8. *The ends of the staves were seen out, &c.*]—The meaning is, that as the staves, or poles, were longer than the ark, they were visible from the inside of the oracle, or holy-place, but were not to be seen from the outside. The copulative, ‘and,’ in the next clause of the sentence, should have been rendered by, ‘but.’ See *Noldius*.

9. *There was nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone.*]—The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of the ark of the covenant, says, ‘Wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant.’ In order to reconcile these two texts of Holy Scripture, it has been observed, that the apostle must be supposed to speak of the ark in the time of Moses. Or it may be remarked, that by ‘the ark,’ in this passage, may be understood the small coffer, which appears to have been in the side of it, in which the Philistines, when they returned it to the Israelites, put the golden mice, we read, and the images of their emerods. See 1 Sam. vi. 5, 8. It is well known that the preposition **ב**, which we render ‘in,’ means also ‘by, near, on, beside,’ &c.—*Dr. Kennicott’s Second Dissert.* p. 296—299.

10. *The cloud filled the house of the Lord.*]—This cloud was always considered as a symbol of the divine presence and protection. See Exod. xvi. 10. xxiv. 15, 16, and compare the parallel texts. When we consider the galleries, with which the temple was surrounded, the height and narrowness of the windows, and that the holy-place, or sanctuary, was a building within a building, it must have presented, in general, the awful image of darkness, or religious gloom, except when enlightened in a miraculous manner by the glory of the Lord. Hence, the Psalmist says, that He who dwelleth in light, which is inaccessible, ‘Made darkness his secret place; his pavilion round about him were dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies.’ Psalm xviii. 11.

27. *But will God indeed dwell on the earth?*]—A very significant expression, elegantly describing the amazement and rapture of the royal prophet’s mind.—‘God!’ He uses no epithet, where writers of inferior discernment would have been fond of multiplying them; but speaks of the Deity as an incompre-

hensible being, whose excellency is exalted above all praise. ‘Dwell!’—To bestow on sinful creatures a propitious look, or favor them with a transient visit of kindness, would have been an unutterable obligation: will he then vouchsafe to fix his ABODE with us?—*Fawkes.*

29. *Toward this place.*]—That is, ‘in this place.’ So verses 35, 38, 42, and 44. But it is probable, that Solomon, having first addressed the people, turned with his face ‘toward’ the altar, and offered his solemn prayer and invocation to Almighty God on his knees. Then standing up, ver. 55, he pronounced his benediction on the congregation of Israel.

51. *The furnace of iron.*]—A strong metaphorical expression, denoting a state of the most wretched bondage and slavery. See note on Deut. iv. 20.

63. *Two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep.*]—We are not to suppose, that these victims were sacrificed in the course of one day, or on one altar; (see ver. 64) but that they were offered in the course of the fourteen days, during which the feast of the Dedication and the feast of Tabernacles lasted. This custom of dedicating temples prevailed also among the Heathens, whose hecatombs appear to have been imitations of the Hebrew sacrifices.

66. *On the eighth day he sent, &c.*]—That is, the day after the latter feast of Tabernacles, which lasted seven days. It is said, 2 Chron. 7. 10, that ‘on the three and twentieth day he sent the people away,’ which Houbigant thinks cannot be reconciled. He is of opinion, that something has been omitted here, which should have been supplied from the parallel place; but it is probable, that these fourteen days of rejoicing were not kept without intermission, particularly as the day of expiation, or atonement, was celebrated on the tenth of Tisri, or Ethanim. See Levit. xxiii. 27; and Calendar of the Jews, in Prolegom. p. 66. By admitting, therefore, a sufficient interval of time to complete the number of days, these two texts may be satisfactorily reconciled; or, otherwise, by considering that the writer of the Chronicles speaks not of twenty-three days, but of the twenty-third day of the month.

CHAP. IX. VER. 3. *Mine eyes and mine heart.*]—By ‘eyes,’ we may here understand the superintending providence of God, or the constant inspection of his divine wisdom; and by the word ‘heart,’ his paternal love and affectionate concern for his chosen people.

11. *Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee.*]—The Scripture expressly tells us, 2 Chron. viii. 2, that these cities were not in the territories of Israel, nor inhabited at

that time by the Israelites. Some of them were conquered by the king of Egypt, who gave them to Solomon as a portion for his daughter, and others by Solomon himself: he had an undoubted right, therefore, to dispose of them as he pleased.

12. *Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities—and they pleased him not.*—The reason was, because the Tyrians were wholly addicted to commerce, and therefore would not remove from the sea-shore, where they were so commodiously situated for that purpose, to live in a soil that was fat and deep, and consequently required the labors of agriculture, to which they were not accustomed. But though Hiram did not approve of these cities, the friendship was not in the least impaired between him and Solomon, who doubtless satisfied him in some other way.—*Bedford.*

13. *He called them the land of Cabul unto this day.*—Cabul, signifies a ‘dirty,’ or ‘displeasing’ country, as it is in the margin; and it is probable, that Hiram gave it this name by way of contempt.

Houbigant thinks that Cabul is derived from an Arabic word, signifying to defer payment of a debt. Some think it compounded of כ, caph, *like, as,* and of בל, or בול, *nothing.*—See *Calmet*, and *Parkhurst.*

15. *Millo.*—Mount Moriah was divided from Sion by a valley, which was guarded on both sides by banks and buttresses, works of immense labor and infinite expense; and these works, it is probable, were called ‘Millo.’ The Hebrew word signifies ‘fulness;’ and the Chaldee paraphrase interprets it ‘a bank, wall,’ or ‘buttress.’—*Lamy.*

18. *Tadmor in the wilderness.*—This city was called by the Greeks Palmyra. It stood in the wilderness of Syria, near the borders of Arabia Deserta, inclining towards the Euphrates. Josephus places it two days’ journey from Upper Syria, one from the Euphrates, and six from Babylon. The ruins which still remain of this city abundantly demonstrate, that it was one of the most magnificent in the east; and it is something surprising, that history should give us no account either when, or by whom, it was reduced to that deplorable condition, in which it lies at present. Its only inhabitants are about thirty or forty miserable families, who have built poor huts of mud, within a spacious court, which once enclosed a magnificent temple. It is thought that Solomon built a city in this place; because, in all the surrounding country, there was no such thing as a well, or fountain, except in this spot only. Compare 2 Chron. viii. 4. For a further account of this city, see *Dr. Wells*, vol. ii. p. 59—76.

23. *Five hundred and fifty.*]—The number of chief overseers is said, chap. v. 16, to have been 3300. In 2 Chron. ii. 18, they are said to be 3600; but in 2 Chron. viii. 10, they are stated to be only 250. It is impossible to reconcile these different numbers, or to pronounce which text is right. Not only here, but in various other parts of the Hebrew Scriptures, the numbers, such as we now find them, appear to be irreconcilable and inconsistent. See note on Num. i. 46.

Some imagine, with Poole, that these officers were of different descriptions, and that the smallest number, 250, were those who presided at one time, the rest taking or supplying their places, in rotation.

28. *And they came to Ophir.*]—This country is much celebrated in Scripture; but commentators and critics widely differ as to its situation. It is agreed, however, that it was originally peopled by Ophir, the son of Joktan. See Gen. x. 26—30. All the texts have been carefully examined which mention this country, and it has been observed, that the same ships which went to Tharshish went also to Ophir; that these ships set out from Ezion-geber, a port of the Red sea; that three years were required to complete their voyage; and that they returned freighted with gold, peacocks, apes, spices, ivory, and ebony. Lastly, it appears, that the gold of Ophir was in the highest esteem, and that this country produced a larger quantity of this precious metal than any other then known. It is in vain to attempt to ascertain its situation; some have sought for it in America, and think it was Hispaniola, of which Columbus said he had discovered the Ophir of Solomon. Postel thinks it was in Peru. Bp. Huet, in his dissertation on the navigation of Solomon, says the land of Ophir was on the eastern coast of Africa, which the Arabians call Zanguebar. But the most probable conjecture is, that it was situated somewhere beyond the Ganges, and formed a part of that coast, which stretches from Pegu to the southern point of Malaya; or that it extended, perhaps, as far as the islands of Sumatra and Java. It is by no means necessary to suppose that Solomon's fleet took in all the articles of commerce that have been enumerated, at one place; on the contrary, it is highly probable, that the ships made what is called a trading voyage, and procured different commodities at different ports. For further information, see *Calmet* and *Bochart*, or *Lipenius*, who has written a dissertation on this particular subject.

At no great distance from the city of Malacca there is a hill called 'the golden mountain.' This country was supposed by Josephus to be the Ophir of Solomon. Mr. Le Poivre

observes that the inhabitants of Malacca and Sumatra called their gold mines 'ophirs,' and Dr. Marsden says, that in the latter is a hill called 'mount Ophir,' possibly from its having been rich in gold.

Mr. Bruce, however, with some probability, places Ophir in Africa, opposite to Madagascar, and explains the reason of the voyage taking up three years. The commodities brought to these ships, as gold, ivory, &c. were such as were supplied by Africa, and the mines, he says, may yet be traced there.

CHAP. X. VER. 1. *The queen of Sheba.*—Josephus says that Sheba was the ancient name of the city Meroe, before Cambyses gave it this latter name in honor of his sister. The Ethiopians are confident that this princess was of their country, and Mr. Bruce has given us the history of her and her descendants, from Abyssinian records. But the most probable opinion is, that she came from the southern part of Arabia Felix, and that Sheba was situated on the borders of the Red sea. Hence our Saviour calls her 'the queen of the south,' and says that 'she came from the ends of the earth,' because there is no land beyond the Sabæans in Arabia, whose country is bounded by the Indian ocean, the Persian gulf, and the Red sea. This opinion derives some confirmation from the presents which she brought to Solomon. These we find, verse 10, consisted of gold, spices in abundance, and precious stones; and these are, at present, the natural products of Arabia Felix.

1. *She came to prove him with hard questions.*—These were riddles, or enigmas, agreeably to the oriental custom of those days. See note on Judg. xiv. 12.

5. *There was no more spirit in her.*—An Hebraism, to express the highest degree of admiration and astonishment. The literal meaning is, that her powers of respiration were suspended. Shakspeare has, 'breathless with wonder.'

11. *Almug-trees.*—This word, 2 Chron. ix. 10, owing to a transposition of the letters, is written 'Algum-trees.' It is so in the Hebrew, which our translators have followed. Dr. Shaw says, that this was the same as the cypress-tree, which various authors, from Diodorus Siculus to Bochart, inform us, flourished in those parts of Arabia. The grain of the cypress-wood is extremely close, which renders it proper for making harps, psalteries, and other musical instruments. Some authors are of opinion, however, with Dr. Geddes, that the sandal-tree is here meant.

14. *Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year, was six hundred threescore and six talents.*—After what has been remarked with respect to a variety of texts, no judicious

commentator, when he considers the value of a talent of gold, will vouch for the accuracy of these numbers. See Jewish Coins, in Prolegom. p. 49, 60. The riches of Solomon were doubtless great, and the pious Bp. Wilson observes, 'It has pleased God, in these instances of Solomon's greatness, honor, riches, &c. to give us the most sensible instructions: of the danger of riches, that they are very great temptations to luxury and pride; that they very naturally lead men to forget God, to forsake him, &c.; that, therefore, they are not to be asked for as a blessing, but received with fear, used with great caution, and to good purposes; or else the effect will be the destruction of those that have them, as it really happened to Solomon and to his family.'

18. *Overlaid it with the best gold.*]—We are not to suppose that it was entirely covered with gold; because, before the time of Solomon, we do not read of ivory, which appears to have been considered as a great rarity, and very ornamental. The probability is, therefore, that this throne was inlaid and studded with gold, to give it relief, and to render it more magnificent.

22. *And peacocks.*]—The signification of the last word, תנייִם, of these paragraphs, which describe the imports of Solomon's navy from Tarshish, is dubious. Some of the learned think it means 'parrots;' but the greater number interpret it 'peacocks.'

Hasselquist, describing the commerce of the people of Ethiopia, says, 'The Abyssinians make a journey every year to Cairo, to sell the products of their country, slaves, gold, elephants, drugs, monkeys, parrots, &c. As Solomon's navy is said to have brought gold and silver, elephants' teeth, apes, and peacocks, and this by the way of the Red sea, which washes the east of Abyssinia, one would imagine, as many of the other particulars correspond with each other, that instead of 'peacocks,' the true translation of the last word is 'parrots.' See Harmer, Vol. iv. p. 342.

28. *And linen yarn.*]—According to Norden, 'linen yarn' is one of the principal articles of commerce in Egypt, and is exported in very large quantities, together with unmanufactured flax and spun cotton. All these articles of Egyptian produce were held in high estimation, and were preferred by the Jews, Syrians, and other people, to those of their own country.

Houbigant is of opinion, that the present text is erroneous; and, by a slight alteration, instead of 'linen yarn,' he would read 'chariots.' Dr. Geddes, after the Vulgate, conjectures that the Hebrew word, קוֹרָה, is the name of a place, and renders the passage thus: 'Now horses, for Solomon, were chiefly brought from Egypt; and, particularly, from Kōa.'

The Egyptian horses were celebrated for their superior size, strength, and beauty. Maillet, and other travellers, mention

the extreme difficulty of procuring them; but Solomon's means were facilitated by his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter.—*Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 88. See, also, *Bochart*, and *Le Clerc*.

29. *A chariot came up, &c.*—In order to understand the sense of this verse, it must be observed, that a toll, or custom, was anciently paid to the kings of Egypt, for all horses and chariots that were brought out of their kingdom; namely, six hundred shekels of silver for a chariot, and a hundred and fifty for a horse. But Solomon prevailed on his father-in-law, the king of Egypt, not to demand this tribute of the Israelites; and, instead of it, to accept of a yearly tax. By these means, they were enabled to sell the horses and chariots, which they brought out of Egypt, to the Hittites and Syrians, at a much cheaper rate than these people could purchase them in Egypt.—*Bp. Patrick*.

CHAP. XI. VER. 4. *His heart was not perfect.*—By this epithet, which occurs so often in the Holy Scriptures, is meant that devotion of the mind and affections, which admits of no rivalship, or division. The Syriac version has in this text the epithet 'sincere,' and the Arabic 'intire.' See the texts referred to in the Index under 'Perfect.'

5. *Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians.*—It has been remarked by Selden and others, that the Hebrews had no word to express a goddess; and here the general term אֱלֹהִים, 'Elohim,' is used. The distinction of sex among the heathen deities was not introduced till after the deification of mortals. It would have been better, therefore, to have kept out of the translation of the Bible a notion, which had not yet been adopted by Pagans themselves; and for which there seems no foundation in the Hebrew text. Vid. *Selden*, *De Diis Syris*, *Syntagm.* ii. c. 2, cum *Addit. Beyeri*.

5. *Milcom.*—This is supposed to have been the same idol deity as Moloch, or Molech. See ver. 7.

7. *The hill that is before Jerusalem.*—This was probably the Mount of Olives, which lay to the east of the city; and that the Jews would consider 'before it,' while the west would be behind it.

11. *I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.*—How art thou fallen, thou brightest star of the morning; thou that hadst wisdom for thy spouse, and whose prayer for wisdom was answered! How ought all great men, and especially men of light and knowledge, above others, to take warning by this example, lest they also fall, when they think they stand!—*Bp. Wilson*.

13. *One tribe.*—That is, the numerous tribe of Judah, in-

cluding the small neighbouring tribe of Benjamin. Josephus has, 'two tribes.'

14. *Hadad the Edomite: he was of the king's seed in Edom.*]—It appears from this, that Hadad was a young prince of the royal family of Idumea, who fled into Egypt, after David had conquered his native country. Having obtained a signal victory by the skill and good conduct of Abishai, at that time commander in chief, he afterwards sent the cruel Joab with an order to destroy all the males that should be found in the country; but Hadad had the good fortune to make his escape into Egypt, where he obtained so much favor with the king, that he married his wife's sister and settled there. See verses 17—22.

15. *When David was in Edom.*]—So the present Hebrew text; but the Septuagint and Syriac versions have, 'when David had laid waste Edom;' which is probably the true reading. Compare 2 Sam. viii. 14.

23. *Another adversary.*]—The English reader may wish to be informed, that in all the places, where the word 'adversary' occurs in this chapter, the Hebrew word is שָׂטָן, 'Satan.'

27. *Solomon builded Millo.*]—In consequence of the magnificent edifices which Solomon built, and the reparation of the extensive walls here mentioned, the expenditure must have been enormous, the labor almost incessant, and consequently the taxes on the great body of the people must have been extremely oppressive. Jeroboam, therefore, we may suppose, availed himself of these circumstances to kindle a spirit of sedition and revolt throughout the whole tribe of Ephraim, to which he belonged. See chap. xii. 4.

30. *And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces.*]—This is the first symbolical action we meet with in any prophet; but in after-ages instances of this kind became more frequent. Thus, Jeremiah made himself bonds and yokes, and put them upon his neck, to signify the approaching captivity of Jerusalem, Jer. xxvii. 2. It appears from the nature of the thing, from the records of history, and from the remains of the most ancient languages, that language was, in the early ages of the world, extremely rude, narrow, and equivocal; so that men would be perpetually at a loss, on any new conception, or uncommon incident, to explain themselves intelligibly to one another. This would necessarily set them upon supplying the deficiencies of speech by apt and significant signs. Accordingly, in the first ages of the world, mutual converse was upheld by a mixed discourse of words and actions, (hence came the eastern phrase, Exod. iv. 8. of 'the voice of the sign;') and use and custom, as in most other af-

fairs of life, improving what had arisen out of necessity, into ornament, this practice subsisted long after the necessity was over; especially among the eastern people, whose natural temperament inclined them to a mode of conversation, which so well exercised their vivacity by motion, and so much gratified it by a perpetual representation of material images. Of this we have innumerable instances in Scripture, as well as in this passage. By these actions, the prophets instructed the people in the will of God, and conversed with them by signs: and as it likewise appears, that information by action was at this time and place a very familiar mode of conversation, this will lead to a true defence of the prophetic writings, and enable us to clear them from the charge of absurdity and fanaticism. The absurdity of an action consists in its being extravagant and insignificant; but use, and a fixed application, made these both sober and pertinent. The fanaticism of language consists in a fondness for unusual and foreign modes of speech; but those in question were idiomatic and familiar.—*Bp. Warburton.*

36. *May have a light alway before me in Jerusalem.*]—Rather, 'a lamp,' agreeably to the Hebrew, the Syriac, and the Arabic. By this, we are to understand one of his posterity; which being extinct, may be said to resemble an extinguished lamp. The sacred writers frequently use this metaphor. See chap. xv. 4; and 2 Sam. xiv. 7.

39. *But not for ever.*]—Because, in the days of the Messiah, says Rasi, the kingdom shall be restored to the house of David. He might have added, that few returned from their captivity, except those of the house of Judah, who were delivered from Babylon in a wonderful manner.—*Bp. Patrick.*

40. *Shishak king of Egypt.*]—This Shishak was not of the family of that king of Egypt, whose daughter Solomon had married; but of another race, who were enemies to the Israelites, and to the house of David.

The mother of Rehoboam was an Ammonitess and an idolater, and too likely impressed notions of latitude upon her son, as if all religions were alike: this made him go to Shechem, perhaps, instead of staying at Jerusalem, where he might have consulted God rather than such counsellors.—*Bp. Wilson.*

This is the first time that we find the kings of Egypt mentioned, in the Holy Scriptures, by any name but the general appellation of Pharaoh. Most commentators are of opinion, that Shishak is the same person as the celebrated Sesotris in the Greek historians.

41. *The book of the acts of Solomon.*]—Abarbanel informs us, that the kings of Israel and Judah appointed proper persons,

somewhat like our modern historiographers, whose office it was to record the principal transactions of their respective reigns.

CHAP. XII. VER. 10. *My little finger, &c.*]—This appears to us a strange figure of speech. The Syriac and Arabic versions have, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s thumb.’ The meaning evidently is, that, so far from lightening the burdens of the people, Rehoboam was to oppress them more than his father had done.

11. *I will chastise you with scorpions.*]—The scorpion appears to have been some cruel instrument of punishment. Some of the Jewish Rabbis inform us, that it was a long bag of leather filled with sand, and stuck full of spikes. Others say, that it was a whip with rowels of iron fastened on it; or, perhaps, it was intertwined with the prickles of the shrub, which the Arabs call ‘the scorpion thorn,’ from the exquisite pain which it inflicts.—See *Bochart*.

28. *Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up, &c.*]—These were, doubtless, of the same kind as the calf, which was set up by Aaron; and these were the same words as were used on that occasion. See *Exod. xxxii. 4*.

31. *Made priests of the lowest of the people.*]—The words which we render ‘the lowest of the people,’ according to Abarbanel, may mean, ‘out of all the people;’ that is, he made any persons priests who were willing to be so. This, indeed, seemed to be a case of necessity; for the Levites would not join in these idolatrous practices, as we learn from 2 Chron. xi. 14, and therefore Jeroboam expelled them from his kingdom, and seized on their possessions. The people were thus exempted from the duty of paying tithes; and he not only transferred the kingdom from the house of David, but also the priesthood from the house of Aaron.—See *Bp. Patrick*.

32. *Jeroboam ordained a feast in the eighth month, &c.*]—The Jews held their feast of tabernacles on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, *Levit. xxiii. 34*; so that this feast was entirely of Jeroboam’s own appointment, (see ver. 33.) and the intention of it seems to have been, to alienate the minds of the people from the worship of the true God, as performed at Jerusalem.

CHAP. XIII. VER. 1. to 3. *There came a man of God, &c.*]—Who this ‘man of God’ was, it is in vain to conjecture; but the prophecy which he uttered is one of the most remarkable in the Holy Scriptures. The events that are here foretold, with such specific circumstances, did not happen till above three hundred and fifty years after the prediction. The action to be performed was in itself singular; but, that the name and family of the

person, who was to accomplish the prophecy, should be mentioned, is still more remarkable.

2. *Upon thee shall he offer, &c.*]—That is, he shall slay the priests of the high-places, and then burn their bones, as he did the bones of those who had been buried, and thus pollute the altar. See 2 Kings xxiii. 15, 16, 20.—*Bp. Patrick.*

9. *Eat no bread, nor drink water.*]—The reason why this prophet was forbidden to eat, or drink, with the people of Beth-el, is obvious. In other words, he was not to hold any unnecessary intercourse with idolaters; and he was not to return by the same way that he came, because he might receive some injury from the inhabitants of Beth-el, who, in revenge for his severe denunciations against their altar and worship, might lay wait for him on the road, and offer violence to his person. In those barbarous ages, not to return by the same way that a person came, seems to have been an ordinary precaution to avoid danger.

14. *Sitting under an oak.*]—The Vulgate, the Syriac, and the Arabic, have, ‘sitting under a turpentine-tree.’

24. *A lion met him by the way, and slew him.*]—Many have thought the fate of this prophet severe: but they would do well to consider, that whenever God in an extraordinary manner communicates his will to a prophet, he always makes such an impression on his mind, that he cannot but perceive himself actuated by a divine spirit; and, consequently, he must be assured of the evidence of his own revelation. This evidence the prophet had, who was sent to Beth-el. The consideration of this circumstance should have made him diffident of what a stranger told him, at least till he had shewn him some divine testimony to convince him. Had he acted as he ought to have done in this respect, having once received a command from God, he should not have looked on himself as discharged from it by any authority inferior to that which enjoined it. God enjoined the command; but a false prophet, an inhabitant of a place notorious for idolatry, persuades him to an act of disobedience, contrary to his own inclination, and the duty which he owed to a far superior command. Let us not say then that his crime was small, and that his punishment was too severe: but let us learn from hence to ‘hold fast our faith without wavering,’ and continue to walk stedfastly in the way which the Lord has commanded us; neither turning aside to the right hand, nor to the left; ever remembering that we cannot err, ‘when we do the will of our Father which is in heaven.’—See *Dr. Lightfoot.*

33. *But made again of the lowest of the people priests of the*

high-places.]—The use of ‘high-places’ in public worship was general and ancient; and, as Vossius observes in his notes on Maimonides, it was common long before temples were either built, or deemed lawful. The reason of this seems to be, that those places could not be thought to confine the immensity of God, as they supposed a house did; and, by their height, they were supposed to give his worshippers a nearer approach to heaven. Hence we read, that the Samaritans worshipped upon mount Gerizim, John iv. 20, and Samuel went up to the high place to sacrifice, 1 Sam. ix. 14. Solomon sacrificed on the high place in Gibeon, 1 Kings iii. 4, and the temple itself was built upon a mount, or high place, 2 Chron. iii. 1. The use of ‘high places,’ therefore, was not condemned as absolutely, and always unlawful in itself, but only after the temple was built, when God professed to put his name in that place and no other. Therefore what was lawful in the practice of Samuel and Solomon, before the temple was in being, was now detestable in Jeroboam, since that was constituted by God the only place for his worship.—*Dr. South.*

33. *He consecrated.*]—The Hebrew word, which we render, ‘to consecrate,’ signifies ‘to fill the hand.’ This imports the manner of consecration, which was done by filling the hand. The priest cut off a piece of the sacrifice, and put it into the hands of the person who was to be consecrated; by which ceremony he received a right to sacrifice, and thus became a priest. Our ordination in the Christian church is said to have been anciently performed by the bishop’s delivering the Bible into the hands of the person who was to be ordained; by which ceremony he received power ministerially to dispense the mysteries contained in it, and so was made a presbyter.—*Id.*

CHAP. XIV. VER. 3. *And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels.*]—What the presents were that were made to the ancient prophets, we are not always told; but the particulars of that made by Jeroboam’s queen to the prophet Ahijah, are here given. It may be questioned, however, whether that was any part of the disguise which she assumed, as an eminent prelate, (Bp. Patrick) supposes, who imagines that she presented him with such things as might make the prophet think her to be a country-woman, rather than a courtier.

It undoubtedly was not a present that proclaimed royalty; but it does not appear to have been, in the estimation of the east, a present only fit for a country-woman to have made: for d’Arvieux tells us, that when he waited on an Arab emir, his mother and sister, (to gratify whose curiosity that visit was made,) sent him, early in the morning after his arrival in their camp, a present of pastry, honey, and fresh butter, with a bason

of sweetmeats of Damascus. Now, this present differs but little from that of Jeroboam's wife, who carried loaves, cracknels (or rather cakes enriched with seeds), and a cruse of honey; and it was made by princesses who avowed their quality. The present, then, of Jeroboam's wife, did not discover her quality; but it was not so mean a present as we may, at first, be led to suppose. The Septuagint adds to these presents 'grapes,' and the Syriac version, 'some dried fruit.'—See *Harmer*.

14. *But what? even now.*]—Kimchi, omitting the note of interrogation after 'what,' reads this passage paraphrastically thus: 'but what is this that shall now happen, to that which shall come hereafter?' This appears to be rather a forced interpretation. Houbigant observes that the Hebrew particle *ו* is not always an interrogative, and renders the word by, 'and at this very time.' So, also, the Vulgate. In this text, the present tense seems to be used to express certainty. The house of Jeroboam was not cut off that day; but the holy prophet meant to indicate, that the event was then determined, and as certain, with respect to futurity, as if it had immediately taken place. This may serve to explain our Saviour's declaration to the thief on the cross, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.'

15. *Beyond the river.*]—That is, the river Euphrates.

17. *And came to Tirzah.*]—We find frequent mention in the sacred history of this city, as it was the royal residence of the kings of Israel for a long time after the ten tribes had revolted. And although Jeroboam, who, as the first king of Israel, dwelt for some time at Shechem, yet he seems to have resided in his latter days at Tirzah. The succeeding kings of Israel made this city the seat of government, till Omri, having reigned six years in Tirzah, built Samaria, where he resided; which continued to be the seat of royalty as long as the kingdom of Israel lasted. It appears to have been pleasantly situated; for it is said, Cant. vi. 4, 'Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah.' Its precise situation cannot now be ascertained; but, as Jeroboam was of the tribe of Ephraim, it is natural to suppose, that he would make choice of some place within the district of his own tribe for his residence, and for the seat of his own government.—See *Jac. Bonfrerii Onomastic*.

19. *The book of the chronicles.*]—Not the Chronicles which are still extant, and which form part of our Bible; but the public annals, in which the principal events of every king's reign seem to have been recorded. See chap. xi. 41.

21. *Rehoboam was forty and one years old when, &c.*]—The number of years in this verse is certainly incorrect, though found in all the copies, and in all the ancient versions; except

that, in a fragment of the Vatican and Aldine Septuagint, it is said, after ch. xii. 24, that 'he was sixteen years old,' when he began to reign, and he reigned, as the former copy says, 'twelve years; but, according to the latter, 'seventeen years' in Jerusalem. This agrees with 2 Chron. xiii. 7, where Jeroboam is upbraided with having usurped the kingdom, when Rehoboam was young and tender-hearted; which could not be said, with any propriety, as Dr. Wall observes, of a man who was forty-one years old. Some modern critics think, that the true number is 'twenty-one.' Houbigant adopts the variation of the Septuagint, and Dr. Geddes suspects that the original reading was 'twenty-two.' See note on Num. i. 46.

30. *And there was war between Rehoboam, &c.*]—It is said chap. xii. 24, 'Thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel.' We must suppose, therefore, that this continued warfare was on the part of Rehoboam defensive; and that he and his people were continually engaged in repelling the hostile aggressions of their revolted brethren, the Israelites. As they were now become rival nations, it is natural to suppose, that frequent depredations would be committed on the borders of their respective kingdoms, though there might not have been any general engagement, or decisive victory, on either side.

CHAP. XV. VER. 1. *In the eighteenth year of king Jeroboam.*]—This seems to be inconsistent with what is said ver. 9, concerning Asa; but Abijam's reign might have commenced in Jeroboam's eighteenth year, and he might have died in the twentieth; which, according to the Hebrew mode of reckoning, would be called three years.

5. *Save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.*]—This clause, or exception, is not to be found in the Septuagint; but if it be genuine, it must not be interpreted too strictly.

6. *Between Rehoboam and Jeroboam.*]—The Syriac and Arabic versions have 'between Abijam and Jeroboam.' So, also, some manuscripts; and this was probably the original reading.

10. *And his mother's name was Maachah, &c.*]—There is a very remarkable variation with respect to the name of king Abijam's, or Abijah's mother. In the book of Kings, she is called Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom, or Absalom, and even in 2 Chron. xi. 20, she is also called by this same name; but in 2 Chron. xiii. 2, she is called by the name of Michaiiah, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah.

To solve this difficulty, I beg leave to offer, that the title *אמהמלך*, (Amhemelek, 'king's mother,' 1 Kings ii. 19.) and that of *הגבירה*, (Hegebireh, translated 'queen,' 2 Kings x.

13. and 2 Chron. xv. 16.) describe one and the same thing : I mean, that the phrase, 'and his mother's name was,' &c. when expressed on a king's accession to the throne, at the beginning of his history, does not always imply, that the lady whose name is then mentioned, was the king's (natural) mother. I apprehend that **אִמּוֹ** 'the king's mother,' when so introduced, is only a title of honor and dignity, and enjoyed by one lady, solely, of the royal family at a time, denoting her to be first in rank, chief sultana, or queen dowager, whether she happened to be the king's (natural) mother, or not. This remark seems to be corroborated by the history of king Asa, 1 Kings xv. 10, and 2 Chron. xv. 16, who was Abijam's son. In the book of Kings, at his accession, this same Maachah, Absalom's daughter, is said to be his mother, and Asa afterwards deprived her of the dignity of **גְּבִירָה**, (gebireh, or chief in rank,) on account of her idolatrous proceedings; but it is certain that Maachah was his grandmother, and not his mother, as here described. Therefore, if we look upon the expression of 'the king's mother,' to be only a title of dignity, all the difficulty will cease; for this Maachah was really Abijam's mother, the dearly beloved wife of his father, Rehoboam, who, for her sake, appointed her son, Abijam, to be his successor to the throne; but when Abijam came to be king, that dignity of the king's mother, or the first in rank of the royal family, was for some reason, on account of seniority, perhaps, given to Michaiiah, the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah; and afterwards, on the death of Michaiiah, that dignity devolved to Maachah, and she enjoyed it, at the accession of Asa, her grandson, who afterwards degraded her for her idolatry. This I submit as a rational way of reconciling all these passages, which seem so contradictory and repugnant to each other.

The better to prove this assertion, let it be observed, that in 2 Kings xxiv. 12, it is said, 'And Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers; and the king of Babylon took him,' &c. and ver. 15, 'And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers,' &c. And Jeremiah xxix. 2, mentioning the same circumstances, says, 'After that, Jeconiah the king, and the queen, and the eunuchs, the princes of Judah, &c. departed from Jerusalem.' Now it is evident, that 'queen,' in this verse, cannot mean the king's wife, as it would seem by the translators always rendering the word **הַגְּבִירָה**, (he-gebireh) 'queen;' but means the lady that is invested with the dignity of being called 'the king's mother;' the phrase **הַגְּבִירָה** (he-ge-

bireh) in Jeremiah, corresponding with **אִם הַמֶּלֶךְ**, (Am-he-melek, the king's mother) and **אִמּוֹ**, Amu, his mother, in Kings. The Vulgate translates the word **גְּבִירָה**, (gebireh) 1 Kings xi. 19, and 2 Kings x. 13, regina; 1 Kings xv. 13, princeps; Jer. xxix. 2, domina; ibid. xiii. 18, dominatrici; and the English translators always render it 'queen.'

That 'king's mother' was a title of dignity, is obvious from 1 Kings ii. 19. 'Bath-sheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah; and the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand;' for it would have been better to say, 'and caused a seat to be set for her;' but he says, 'for the king's mother;' and, perhaps, it was on this occasion that Bath-sheba was first invested with that dignity.—Fragments to *Calmet's* Dict. No. xvi.

These conjectures are placed beyond a doubt, by the following extracts:

The Oloo Kani (not Oloo Kanai) is not governess of the Crimea. This title, the literal translation of which is 'great queen,' simply denotes a dignity in the harem, which the khan usually confers on one of his sisters; or, if he has none, on one of his daughters, or relations. To this dignity are attached the revenues arising from several villages, and other rights.—*Baron Du Tott*, vol. ii. p. 62.

'On this occasion, the king crowned his mother Malacotawit, conferring on her the dignity and title of Iteghe, the consequence of which station I have often described; i. e. as king's mother, regent, governess of the king when under age, &c. &c.—*Bruce's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 531.

13. *Because she had made an idol in a grove.*—From the terms made use of in the ancient versions, particularly the Vulgate, we may suppose that this idol was erected for purposes of the most abominable lasciviousness and prostitution. It probably resembled the Priapus of the Greeks and Romans, and the Baal-Peor of the Canaanitish nations. 'Insuper, et Maacham, matrem suam, amovit, ne esset princeps in sacris Priapi, et in luco ejus quem consecraverat; subvertitque specum ejus, et confregit simulacrum turpissimum, et combussit in torrente Cedron.'—*Versio Lat. Vulg.*

17. *And builded Ramah, that he might not, &c.*—This was a city belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. By 'building' it, is here meant fortifying it, that the king of Israel might prevent all communication between his subjects and the people of Judah: for this place lay on the confines of both kingdoms,

and in such a narrow pass between the mountains, that a fortification being erected there, no intercourse could be kept up between the people of Israel and Judah without Baasha's permission. For the same interpretation of the verb 'to build,' see ver. 22.

32. *And there was war, &c.*]—This literal repetition of verse 16, in our present Hebrew Bibles, was probably made by the carelessness of some Hebrew copyist, or scribe. It is not to be found in the Vatican copy of the Septuagint.

CHAP. XVI. VER. 8. *Began Elah the son of Baasha, &c.*]—The meaning is, that his reign commenced in the twenty-sixth year of Asa, king of Judah, and that he reigned over Israel in Tirzah two years.

18. *Burned the king's house over him with fire, and died.*]—Some interpreters think that Omri set the palace on fire, with a view to burn Zimri in it, who had retired thither. The Hebrew may bear this construction; but the other seems the more probable interpretation. Profane history has preserved the memory of some princes, who chose to perish in this manner, rather than fall by the sword. Among these, Sardanapalus may be considered as one of the most ancient and best-known examples. Nearly in the same manner, the Saguntines devoted themselves to destruction; and, after them, the inhabitants of Numantia. —See *Justin*, lib. i. c. 3; and *Liv. Hist.* lib. xxi. 14.

24. *He bought the hill Samaria of Shemer.*]—As this hill, and the city which was afterwards built on it, are called 'Samaria,' from its owner Shemer, it would have been better, if our translators had taken a little liberty with the masoretic pointing, and written the Hebrew name, שֶׁמֶר, 'Samar,' which would have rendered the derivation more evident. See *Prolegom.* No. vii; and *Hist. of Jews*, chap. xxiv. Samaria was situated in the midst of the tribe of Ephraim, on the hill that was purchased of Shemer, or Samar. The spot was extremely fertile and pleasant, and the city soon became the capital of the kingdom of Israel. Bochart, who took great pains to trace its ruins, thinks that in ancient times it must have been larger than Jerusalem. At present, it consists only of a few cottages, and some convents, which are inhabited by Greek monks.

34. *According to the word of the Lord which he spake by Joshua.*]—See note on Josh. vi. 26.

CHAP. XVII. VER. 1. *Elijah the Tishbite.*]—This prophet, who is called 'Elias' in the New Testament, was supposed to have been a native of Tishbe, which we learn from Tobit, ch. i. 2, was situated on the right of that city, which is called properly 'Nephthali in Galilee.' This city, in all probability, was the

same as that which is sometimes called Kadesh-Nephtali. It belonged to the Levites, and was one of the three cities of refuge on the west of the Jordan. Elijah was called a Tishbite, from a transposition of the letters, in proper names, by no means uncommon; some reading 'Tishbe,' instead of 'Thisbe.'

1. *There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.*—The truth of this fact is fully proved; and there is no room to doubt that the land of Israel was afflicted with an extraordinary drought in the reign of Ahab: for Josephus informs us, that Menander, in his history of Phœnicia, had related, that there was a great drought in Palestine in the time of Ithobalus; whose daughter 'Jezebel' married king Ahab. See chap. xvi. 31. Josephus likewise gives us the same account that we have in the Bible. 'Elijah,' says he, 'went and told Ahab, that God had declared unto him, that there would be neither rain, nor dew, till he shewed himself to him again.'

This circumstance of its not raining till he had shewed himself to Ahab again, is collected from the first verse of the next chapter. It appears from a passage in the Epistle of the Apostle James, chap. v. 17, that the prophet did not only predict this calamity, but prayed likewise to God just before it happened according to his prediction. On this prayer, infidelity has grounded an objection against the history. It is natural for every man to wish well to his own country; some therefore have esteemed it a very ill thing in Elijah to imprecate so great a calamity upon his native land: and, as putting up this prayer is supposed to be an argument of his ill temper, so it is made an objection against the authority of the Scriptures, that they represent Almighty God answering the passionate imprecation of the prophet. But the truth of the case is, Elijah knew that God would inflict this evil upon the Israelites for wise and good ends; and prayed for it, that they might know it came from the true God. And surely no man will affirm, that the Supreme Ruler of the world might not, after much long-suffering and forbearance, justly punish a people for their sins; or pretend, that it was evil in a prophet to foretel the impending judgment, that it might be prevented by their repentance.—*Morris.*

Instead of 'these years' our translation would have been more intelligible, if it had been, 'for some years,' or 'for these years to come.'

4. *I have commanded the ravens.*—Though the Vulgate, the Septuagint, Grotius, and several learned commentators, render the word 'Orebim,' as an appellative, by the term 'ravens;' yet there are others, who either think that it signifies 'merchants,' as in Ezek. xxvii. 27; or 'the Arabs,' and read the word 'Are-

bim,' as in 2 Chron. xxi. 16, and Nehem iv. 7. It is, indeed, objected to these critics, that the word Orebim is never used to express merchants, without some other words being joined to it, as in the place referred to in Ezekiel.

The most probable opinion is, that these Orebim were the inhabitants of some city; and we find from Breschith Rabba, chap. xxxiii, that there was a city named Orbo, not far from Scythopolis, whose inhabitants were named Orbim. Eusebius confirms this assertion, 'that the Orbim, the inhabitants of a town on the borders of Arabia, supplied Elijah with food.' A modern writer has, with great ingenuity, proved, that there was in the country of Bethshan, in Decapolis, a little town by the brook Cherith called Oreb, or Orbo; and asserts that the word Orbim, which we translate 'ravens,' signifies the inhabitants of this little town. If we wanted any further support for this opinion, it may be added, that the Arabic version translates the word Orbim as a proper name, rendering it 'the inhabitants of Orbim.' See *Relandi Palæst.* p. 913.

There may be one objection to this interpretation of the text, which is, that the prophet was directed to this place, in order to conceal himself from those who would seek to kill him; and that his living among the Orbim would render it impossible for him to be secreted long. To this it may be replied, that some good persons might be resident in the place, who knew the motive and design of Elijah's arrival, and who, in obedience to the divine command, as well as from reverence of the prophet's character, were induced not only to supply his necessities, but likewise to keep his residence a profound secret. See *Le Clerc, Bochart, Dr. Kennicott*, vol. ii. p. 581; and *Mem. of St. Jerome*, iii. 19.

There are few who will not think this comment on the text highly probable, and satisfactory; but some may be pleased with the following learned and ingenious note of Grotius.

The raven is a bird distinguished for its rapacity; yet God often shews that he not only forms the nature of his creatures, but also changes it. St. Jerome relates, that the same circumstance which happened to Elijah happened also to Paul the hermit. We find in Ælian, and in the ancient poets, instances of persons, who have been nourished by wolves, mares, dogs, and foxes. The history of a boy, who was brought up by a she-goat, which Procopius relates, (*Gothic. lib. ii.*) renders the story respecting Ægisthus more probable, that he was really nourished and brought up by that animal. Plutarch says of Saturn, that 'he was fed with ambrosia in his den by birds from the rock.' Οὗς πετομένους ἀμβροσίαν ἐπιφέρειν αὐτῷ.—*Op. Mor.* p. 794.

9. *Zarephath.*]—Zarephath, or, as it is called in the New Testament, ‘Sarepta,’ was situated between Tyre and Zidon. All that remains of it, at present, are a small number of houses on the tops of the mountains, a few miles from the sea; but there is reason to believe, that the principal part of the city formerly stood below, in a space between the hills and the sea, because there are still large ruins to be seen there.—*Dr. Wells.*

12. *An handful of meal in a barrel.*]—The manner in which they keep their corn in the East, Sandys tells us, is by means of long vessels of clay; it being subject to be eaten by worms without that precaution. This he observed at Gaza.

Agreeably to this, I remember Nordin says, that a barbarian of Upper Egypt opened one of the great jars, in order to shew him how they preserved their corn there.

The barrel in which the woman of Zarephath kept her corn, of which she had only enough left to make a handful of meal, might be a vessel of much the same kind; and, consequently, improperly translated ‘a barrel.’ It is the same word, in the original, that is used for the vessels in which Gideon’s soldiers concealed their torches, and which they broke with a clashing, terrifying noise, when they blew with their trumpets; and both circumstances suppose their being vessels of earth.

It does not, however, follow from hence, that they had these things with them for keeping their corn: it might be for fetching water; for we find the same word is expressive of the vessels in which women used to fetch water; and no wonder, since the same sort of vessels are still used for both purposes.—*Harmer*, vol. i. 475.

Our translators have rendered three words, which are very different in Hebrew, by the same term, ‘cruse.’ The Hebrew words are *בִּקְבוּק*, *צֶלֶה* and *צֶפֶה*. Vid. *Taylor’s Heb. Concord.*

15. *And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah.*]—This poor widow, who is here related to have imparted to Elijah her last supply of meal and oil, was an inhabitant of Zarephath, without the bounds of God’s people. She had been brought up in gross idolatry and ignorance of the God of Israel: or if she had heard of his name, which is all that seems probable, she had been taught to disbelieve the mighty wonders of his hand, and she was still less likely to believe his prophets. It appears, therefore, that she must have been wrought on by an unmixed principle of humanity. She looked upon him almost as a fellow-partner in the same affliction with herself; she considered that he had come a weary pilgrimage, in a sultry climate, through an exhausted country, where neither bread nor water were to be had but by acts of liberality: there-

fore her heart was touched with pity; she turned in silence, and went and did according as he had said.—*Sterne.*

21. *And he stretched himself upon the child three times.]—*Elijah, in raising up the only son of the widow of Sarepta, ‘stretched himself upon the child three times;’ and Elisha, the disciple of this great prophet, did the same when he raised up the son of the Shunammite woman, 2 Kings iv. 34. Certainly, no one can think that these children were only chilled with cold, or in a swoon; so that the prophets, by stretching themselves upon them, only warmed them, and thus restored them to health. They were perfectly dead, as appears from the event; for ‘the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived.’ Besides, how could a recovering from a swoon, or warmth restored, merit that the Scripture should make express mention of it, and place this among the miracles performed by the prophets? When the soul is once separated from the body, it is useless for a living body to stretch itself, lie down, and place its hands on those of the dead. All the powers of nature can do nothing in this case; because it requires an overcoming of that very law of nature, which unites the body to the soul; a law which cannot be reversed but by God alone, the author of it. If the Hebrew word *וַיִּשְׁטַח* signified an immaterial and immortal soul, one might deduce from this story a proof of the soul’s immortality; but that word, in various places of Scripture, and, perhaps, in the present, signifies ‘the life,’ or ‘breath.’—*Scheuchzer, Phys. Sacr.*

CHAP. XVIII. VER. 1. *In the third year.]—*This form of expression in Hebrew, and also in Latin, means ‘after the third year;’ i. e. some time between the third and fourth year: for the ordinal was not prefixed till the year which it designates was complete. Thus, when Horace says ‘Nonum prematur in annum,’ he means that it was ‘to be kept full nine years,’ and not any space between eight and nine.

10. *There is no nation or kingdom.]—*He must mean the small, neighbouring, tributary nations, some of which were governed by petty princes, or emirs.—*Dr. Geddes.*

12. *But I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth.]—*Though this good character be here given by the person himself, we are not immediately to admit the suspicion of pride and vanity. What Obadiah says of himself is only for the sake of self-preservation. If we never commend ourselves for a less weighty reason, we shall not incur the just censure of boasting and vain-glory. Some have put the question, whether this be the same as Obadiah the prophet? But it does not appear that this person was at all invested with the prophetic office; and

Obadiah, whose short book of prophecies we have among the minor prophets, seems to have lived a good deal later than the reign of Ahab. We are not obliged to conceive of Obadiah as a perfect man, or one without sin; but he was upright, he truly feared God, and sincerely respected his laws. He had been free from great transgressions; and the failings or offences of an inferior kind, which he had been surprised into, were not allowed of, or persisted in. This is what is implied in 'fearing God from his youth.'—See *Dr. Lardner*.

13. *I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets, &c.]—*Elijah, in his appeal to the people, tells them, 'I, even I only, remain a prophet of the Lord,' ver. 22; and therefore we can scarcely imagine, that the hundred preserved by Obadiah were men actually inspired, and invested with the prophetic character; but such only as were the disciples of the prophets. For it is probable, that even in Jezebel's time, there were remaining in Israel schools of the prophets, which she endeavoured to destroy, that there might be none remaining to instruct the people in the true religion.—*Le Clerc*.

19. *The prophets of Baal four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred.]—*We are not to suppose that these eight hundred and fifty prophets, or even the four hundred of the groves, eat at the royal table, where Jezebel herself sat; for though it is not unusual in the east for servants to eat at the same table where their masters have eaten, after they have done, and though several hundred eat in the palaces of the eastern princes; yet it could never be thought necessary by Jezebel to have four hundred prophets in waiting at once. Probably the words mean, that these four hundred prophets of the groves fed daily at a common table, in or near the temple of the idol which they served, and which was provided for them at the expense of Jezebel; living there in a kind of collegiate way, as the prophets of Jehovah appear to have done.

Their business was, perhaps, to sing the praises of the idols which they worshipped, and to watch, from time to time, in their temples, under the pretence of receiving oracular answers to the inquiries of those who came to consult them; and, it may be, to teach the worshippers in what form of words to address the deity whom they served.—*Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 206.

28. *And cut themselves, after their manner, with knives and lancets.]—*Modern travellers inform us, that in Turkey, Persia, and some parts of the Indies, there are fanatics, who think it very meritorious, and an acceptable service to God, to cut and mangle their own flesh. To this barbarous species of super-

stitution, which, it appears, was accompanied with music, Propertius alludes in the following lines :

Cur aliquis sacris laniat sua brachia cultris,
Et Phrygis insanos cæditur ad numeros?

Lib. ii. eleg. xviii.

And Martial,

Alba minùs sævis lacerantur brachia cultris,
Cum furit ad Phrygios enthea turba modos.

See, also, *Apuleius*, lib. viii. and *Lactantius*, lib. i. c. 21.

From these and other authorities it appears, that such barbarous superstitions were not peculiar to the Canaanitish nations, but prevailed also among the Greeks and Romans.

29. *And they prophesied.*]—Few words have a more general and indefinite signification than the verb, ‘to prophesy.’ In the present text, it cannot possibly mean the supernatural gift of foretelling events; and therefore we are only to understand by it, that these ignorant idolaters spent their time in offering up prayers, and in singing hymns, perhaps, to their imaginary gods. The Chaldee paraphrast represents them as possessed with a sort of religious furor; and the Arabic version says, that immediately as the mid-day was past, they began to pray.

See the texts referred to in the Index under the words ‘Prophesy,’ and ‘Prophets.’

30. *He repaired the altar of the Lord, that was broken down.*]—This altar was certainly one of those, which were built in the time of the judges of Israel; when, for want of a fixed place of worship, such structures were permitted. Both Tacitus (*Hist.* lib. ii. § 78.) and Suetonius (in *Vesp.* v.) speak of the gods of Carmel, whom Vespasian went to consult when he was in Judea: adding, that his priest, Basilides, promised him all manner of success; but that there was neither temple nor statue on the mountain, but one altar only, venerable for its antiquity. This altar, doubtless, had its origin from that on which Elijah offered his memorable sacrifice, and which even the heathens held so sacred, that, when they became masters of the country, they would not place so much as an image near it.—See *Calmet*.

35. *And he filled the trench also with water.*]—Rather, ‘and the trench was filled with water,’ in the passive form.

37. *Thou hast turned their heart back again.*]—That is, ‘thou hast converted their hearts.’

42. *And put his face between his knees.*]—Sir John Chardin

confirms Dr. Shaw's account of the devout posture of some people of the Levant, which resembles that made use of by Elijah, just before the descent of the rain.

Dr. Shaw's account may be found in his *Travels*, p. 233; that in the MS. of Sir John Chardin is as follows: 'The der-vises, especially those of the Indies, put themselves in this posture,' he says, 'in order to meditate, and also to repose themselves. They tie their knees against their belly with their girdle, and then lay their heads on them. This, according to them, is the best posture for recollecting themselves.'

44. *A little cloud.*]—Mr. Bruce (*Travels*, vol. iii. p. 669.) has an observation which greatly corroborates this phænomenon. He says, 'there are three remarkable appearances attending the inundation of the Nile. Every morning in Abyssinia is clear, and the sun shines; about nine, a small cloud, not above four feet broad, appears in the east, whirling violently round as if upon an axis; but arrived near the zenith, it first abates its motion, then loses its form, and extends itself greatly, and seems to call up vapors from all opposite quarters. These clouds having obtained nearly the same height, rush against each other with great violence, and put me always in mind of Elijah's foretelling rain on mount Carmel. The air, impelled before the heaviest mass, or swiftest mover, makes an impression of its own form in the collection of clouds opposite; and the moment it has taken possession of the space made to receive it, the most violent thunder possible to be conceived instantly follows, with rain; and, after some hours, the sky again clears.'

Ingenious travellers have supposed, that the kind of cloud, which the servant of Elijah saw, is a natural prognostic of rain, and observed as such in the east at this day.

'I have noticed this often at sea,' says Dr. A. Clarke, 'and have seen it repeated several times on the same day in the English Channel. A cloud, about the 'size of a man's hand,' first appeared; this gradually increased till the whole heavens were robed in black, and a dreadful storm was the consequence. When the storm had discharged itself, and all was comparatively clear, the re-appearance of the hand-like cloud was the undoubted evidence, as it was the forerunner, of another storm.'

CHAP. XIX. VER. 4. *A juniper-tree.*]—Our translators in rendering the Hebrew word סמ, appear to have followed only the Vulgate. The Syriac has 'the turpentine-tree.' The Chaldee paraphrase and the Arabic version have 'a broom-tree.' So, also, Montanus and Le Clerc would render it; and, after them, Dr. Geddes.

12. *And after the fire a still small voice.*—There seems to have been a symbolical admonition, or instruction, given to Elijah in this divine appearance. God shewed the prophet, that it was not his will, or nature, to effect his purposes among men by noise and vehemence, like what is brought to pass by stormy winds, earthquakes, or thunder and lightning; but by ‘the small still voice’ of reason, exhortation, and admonition; that he was not inclined by his nature to terrify and destroy, but placidly to invite and preserve. Elijah, who seems to have been of a warm and hasty temper, wearied out with the idolatries of the Israelites, and seeing no regard paid to his admonitions, or to the miracle which had been wrought to convince them, was desirous that God should remove so great an evil by some violent method, and reduce those obstinate offenders to obedience by the display of his divine power; but God, at the same time that he shewed the prophet he had all the elements ready armed at his command, which he could instantly employ to punish and destroy the idolaters, signified, notwithstanding, by ‘the still small voice,’ his patience and tenderness, which he would have the prophet imitate by restraining his impetuous anger.

Bp. Warburton observes, that, according to the laws of nature, fiery eruptions are always preceded by an earthquake; and disorder below is accompanied with the like above, such as whirlwinds and a troubled sky. ‘It is remarkable,’ he adds, ‘that the precursors of God’s presence here follow each other in the order of physical progression, the tempest, the earthquake, and the fire; and when the sacred historian says ‘the Lord was not in any of these,’ he intimates that they were pure physical appearances, and that the Lord was in ‘the still small voice,’ which closed this dreadful procession, intimating that these natural appearances were ministerial to the interposition of the Author and Lord of Nature.’

13. *And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle.*—The Jews account it a token of reverence to have their feet bare during public worship, and their heads covered. This was accordingly the practice, not of the priests only, but of the people also; and, with respect to the latter, it continues to this day. Thus, on the divine appearance to Moses in the bush, it is said, ‘he hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God,’ Exod. iii. 6; and, on the extraordinary manifestation of the divine presence to Elijah, ‘he wrapped his face in his mantle.’ On the same account, perhaps, the angels were represented in vision to Isaiah as covering their faces with their wings in the presence of Jehovah, Isaiah vi. 2.

The ancient Romans performed their sacred rites with a covering on their heads. Thus Virgil:

Spes est pacis, ait. Tum numina sancta precamur
Palladis armisonæ, quæ prima accepit ovantes:
Et capita ante aras Phrygio velamur amictu.

ÆN. III. 543.

————— ‘Our way we bend
To Pallas, and the sacred hill ascend:
There prostrate to the fierce virago pray,
Whose temple was the land-mark of our way.
Each with a Phrygian mantle veil’d his head.’

DRYDEN.

The Greeks, on the contrary, performed their sacred rites bare-headed. St. Paul, therefore, writing to the Corinthians, who were Greeks, says, ‘every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoreth his head,’ 1 Cor. xi. 4.—*Burder.*

19. *Cast his mantle upon him.*—The mantle was the proper habit of prophets; and we may suppose, from the circumstance of Elijah’s casting it on Elisha, that this was a principal part of the ceremony of inauguration. It is probable, that he uttered a benediction, or some form of words, at the same time, which enabled Elisha fully to understand what his intention was. In the short narratives with which the Holy Scriptures abound, many circumstances are omitted, which, as Le Clerc observes, may be supplied by an intelligent reader; nor must we ever conclude for a certainty, that any thing has not been said, or done, because it is passed over in silence.

CHAP. XX. VER. 11. *Harness.*—This is an obsolete word for ‘armour,’ and derived from the French word, ‘harnois.’ See Exod. xiii. 18.

12. *As he was drinking, he and the kings, in the pavilions.*—These pavilions, as they are called, were only booths, or common tents. And, that persons even of regal dignity regaled themselves in this manner, we may learn from a passage in Dr. Chandler’s Travels in Asia Minor, p. 149. ‘While we were employed on the theatre of Miletus, the Aga of Suki, son-in-law by marriage to Elez Oghi, crossed the plain towards us, attended by a considerable train of domestics and officers, with vests and turbans of various and lively colors, mounted on long-tailed horses, with showy trappings, and glittering furniture. He returned after hawking to Miletus, and we went to visit him, with a present of coffee and sugar; but we were told that

two favorite birds had flown away, and that he was vexed and tired. A couch was prepared for him beneath a shed made against a cottage, and covered with green boughs to keep off the sun. He entered as we were standing by, and fell down on it to sleep, without taking any notice of us.

23. *Their gods are gods of the hills, &c.*—When Ben-hadad, whose forces consisted of chariots and horsemen, had warred with ill success against the king of Israel, his ministers, in a council of war, delivered their advice to him in the terms included in this verse. From this passage I collect, 1. That the army of Israel, consisting all of infantry, had chosen the situation of the hills; and this with proper military skill. 2. That their constant success in such a disposition of their forces, occasioned this advice of the ministers of Ben-hadad; and 3. That these men, possessed with the general notion of local, tutelary deities, and finding the arms of Israel always successful on the hills, took it for the more eminent manifestation of the power of their gods. ‘Their gods,’ say they, ‘are gods of the hills.’ Their superstition dictated the first part of their opinion; and their skill in war, the second; ‘Let us fight them in the plain.’

The operations of war had been hitherto most absurd; they had attacked an army of infantry with one of cavalry, on hills and in defiles. The advice of these ministers was certainly good; but how to put it in execution was the question; for they being the assailants, the Israelites were masters of their ground. So that after all, there was no other way of bringing them into the plains, but by beating them from the hills; and there they must have remained, till famine and desertion had ended the quarrel. In this exigence, their blasphemy against the God of Israel enabled them to put their counsels against him in execution. They fancied, according to the superstition of that time, and so gave out, ‘that he was god of the hills, but not of the valleys.’ His omnipotence being thus disputed, he placed his people in the plains, and sent his prophet, ver. 28, to predict the coming vengeance on his enemies; and their defeat was a singular and undeniable confirmation both of his divine omnipotence and veracity.—*Bp. Warburton.*

26. *Aphek.*—Aphek was situated in Libanus, on the banks of the river Adonis, between Heliopolis and Biblos. It is probably the same place that Paul Lucas mentions in his voyage to the Levant, vol. i. c. 20. It was swallowed up by an earthquake, and formed a lake about nine miles in circumference, in which he says there are several houses still to be seen entire under the water. Some ancient writers inform us, that the soil of the surrounding country was very bituminous, which seems

to confirm the opinion of those writers, who think that subterraneous fires consumed the earth on which the city stood, so that it sunk at once, and a lake was soon formed in its place.

28. *The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys.*—According to the heathen mythology, there was a great variety of gods, each of which had his particular jurisdiction. Some presided over whole countries, others had only particular places under their care; some were gods of woods, some of rivers, and others of mountains. And, probably, the Syrians imagined that the God of Israel was a god of the mountains, because they saw that the land of Canaan was a mountainous country, and that the Israelites delighted to worship in high places. They might also have heard, that their law was given on the top of a mountain; they knew that their celebrated temple stood on a famous eminence, and that Samaria was also built on the top of a hill, near which they themselves received so signal a defeat. See note on ver. 23.—*Bp. Patrick.*

32. *They girded sackcloth on their loins, and put ropes on their heads.*—Approaching persons with a sword hanging to the neck is in the east a very humble and submissive act. Thevenot has mentioned this circumstance (part i. p. 289.) in the account which he gives of the taking of Bagdat by the Turks in 1638. When the besieged entreated quarter, the principal officer went to the grand vizier with a scarf about his neck, and his sword wreathed in it, and begged mercy. The ropes mentioned in this passage were probably what they suspended their swords with. The Hebrew word in the text certainly signifies ‘heads,’ but the meaning in this place is, probably, ‘necks,’ and so the Arabic translators understood it.

34. *And thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria.*—This was a proposal better relished by Ahab, than understood by commentators. *Bp. Patrick* tells us, that some suppose the word *חצרות* signifies ‘market-places,’ where things were sold, the toll of which was to belong to Ahab; others think, that he meant ‘courts of judicature,’ where he should exercise a jurisdiction over the Syrians; a third opinion is, that it meant, what we now call ‘a piazza,’ of which he was to receive the rents; but commonly, he says, interpreters understand by the word ‘fortifications,’ or ‘citadels.’ None of these suppositions, however, pleased *Gotf. Vallandus*, who attempts to prove that ‘palaces’ are meant; the building of which by Ahab would be a token of subjection in Ben-hadad.

Perhaps the privileges which we know were actually granted

to the Venetians for their aid, by the states of the kingdom of Jerusalem, in the time of the captivity of Baldwin II, may more satisfactorily explain these words of Ben-hadad. William of Tyre, the greatest historian of the Croisades, has preserved a copy of that ancient grant, (*Gesta Dei*, p. 830, 831.) which the curious reader may consult, and in which he will find ample room for the exercise of his talents as an antiquary. It will be sufficient here to observe, that it appears from that convention, as well as from the accounts, which he has elsewhere given of the privileges granted to other nations for their assistance, that they were wont to assign churches, and to give streets, in their towns and cities, to those foreign nations, together with great liberties and jurisdictions in these streets. Thus, that historian tells us, that the Genoese had a street in Accon, or St. John d'Acre, together with full jurisdiction in it, and a church, as a reward for taking that city, together with a third part of the dues of the port. So the above-mentioned ancient instrument very clearly shews, that the Venetians had a street also in Accon; and it explains what this full jurisdiction in a street means, by giving them liberty to have in their streets an oven, a mill, a bagnio, weights and measures for wine, oil, and honey, if they thought fit, and also to judge causes among themselves, together with as great a jurisdiction over all those that dwelt in their street and houses, of whatever nation they might be, as the king of Jerusalem had over others.

May we not believe, that the same, or nearly the same franchises and regalities as were granted the Venetians and Genoese, to obtain aid from them, the father of Ahab had granted to Ben-hadad's father to obtain peace, and that Ben-hadad, on this fatal turn of his affairs, proposed to grant to Ahab in Damascus a quarter for his subjects to live in, which he should possess, and enjoy the same jurisdiction over them, as he did over the rest of his kingdom? Such a power in Samaria, and such a making over of a part of it to him, in annexing it to the kingdom of Syria, with a right of building such idol-temples as he thought fit, was a sufficient disgrace to the father of Ahab; and the proposing to give Ahab a like honor in Damascus was a proof of the most abject adulation in Ben-hadad. As the things that commentators have mentioned are either not of importance enough to answer the general representations of matters in the history, or absolutely destructive of them, a medium is to be sought for.—*Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 489—492.

This text will receive some further illustration from a short extract from Knolles's history of the Turks. Speaking of the siege of Constantinople by Bajazet, he says, Emanuel, the be-

sieged emperor, wearied with these long wars, sent an ambassador to Bajazet, to treat for terms of peace; to which Bajazet was the more willing to listen, because he had heard that Tamerlane, the great Tartarian prince, intended shortly to make war on him. Yet this peace could not be obtained, except on condition that the emperor should grant free liberty for the Turks to dwell together in one street of Constantinople, with free exercise of their own religion and laws, under a judge of their own nation; and farther, to pay to the Turkish king a yearly tribute of ten thousand ducats: which dishonorable conditions the distressed emperor was glad to accept of. Thus was this long siege raised, and soon after, a great many Turks with their families were sent out of Bithynia, to dwell in Constantinople, and a church was there built for them.

38. *Disguised himself with ashes upon his face.*—The Hebrew expression אֶפְרָיִם, which our translators render ‘with ashes,’ may mean, ‘with a veil,’ or ‘a bandage.’ So Montanus and Houbigant render the text, which is supported by the Chaldee paraphrase, and by the Vatican copy of the Septuagint.

CHAP. XXI. VER. 3. *And Naboth said to Ahab, The Lord forbid, &c.*—The law of Moses prohibited the alienation, or sale of lands, from one tribe or family to another, unless the possessor were reduced to poverty; and then property so sold was to revert to the original owner, or his representatives, at the jubilee. See Levit. xxv. 23—28.

8. *Seal.*—Seals are of very ancient invention. Thus, Judah left his seal with Tamar as a pledge. The Hebrews wore their seals, or signets, in rings on their fingers, or in bracelets on their arms. Sealing-rings, called ‘annuli signatorii,’ ‘sigillares,’ and ‘chirographi,’ are said by profane authors to have been invented by the Lacedæmonians, who, not content to shut their chests, armouries, &c. with keys, added a seal also. Letters and contracts were sealed thus: first, they were tied up with thread, or a string; then the wax was applied to the knot, and the seal impressed on it. Rings seem to have been used as seals in almost every country. Pliny, however, observes, that seals were scarcely used at the time of the Trojan war; the method of closing letters was by curious knots, which invention was particularly honored, as in the instance of the Gordian knot. We are informed, also, by Pliny, that in his time no seals were used, except in the Roman empire; but at Rome, that testaments were null and void, without the testator’s seal, and the seals of seven witnesses.—*Wilson’s Archæol. Dict. art. ‘Seal.’*

9. *Set Naboth on high, &c.*]—That is, ‘bring him to his trial;’ in which case the prisoner was ‘set up on high,’ that he might be the better seen and heard. Such is still the practice in our courts of criminal justice.

19. *In the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth, shall dogs lick thy blood.*]—This prophecy was at first doubtless intended to be literally fulfilled; but on Ahab’s repentance, the punishment was transferred from him to his son Jehoram, in whom it was actually accomplished: for his ‘dead body was cast into the portion of the field of Naboth, the Jezreelite,’ for the dogs to devour, 2 Kings ix. 25.

23. *The dogs shall eat Jezebel.*]—Shocking as this narrative must appear to those whose minds have been humanised by the gradual influence of Christianity, we find something very similar to it in the accounts of modern travellers.

Mr. Bruce, when at Gondar, says, ‘The bodies of those killed by the sword were hewn to pieces, and scattered about the streets, being denied burial. I was miserable, and almost driven to despair, at seeing my hunting-dogs twice let loose by the carelessness of my servants, bringing into the court-yard the heads and arms of slaughtered men, and which I could no way prevent, but by the destruction of the dogs themselves.’ He also adds, that upon being asked by the king the reason of his dejected and sickly appearance, he informed him, among other reasons, ‘that it was occasioned by the execution of three men, which he had lately seen; because the hyænas, allured into the streets by the quantity of carrion, would not let him pass by night in safety from the palace; and because the dogs fled into his house, to eat pieces of human carcases at their leisure.’—Travels, vol. iv. p. 81.

This account illustrates also the readiness of the dogs to lick the blood of Ahab, 1 Kings xxii. 38, in perfect conformity with which is the expression of the prophet Jeremiah, xv. 3. ‘I will appoint over them the sword to slay, and the dogs to tear.’

27. *When Ahab heard those words—he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh.*]—In consideration of Ahab’s repentance, God revoked the sentence, which he had pronounced against him, and transferred it to his posterity; and yet we do not find that he brought forth any ‘fruits meet for repentance.’ He neither renounced his superstitions, nor destroyed his idols, nor restored Naboth’s vineyard, nor re-established the true worship of God. Probably, his repentance was true, though imperfect; and his sorrow sincere, though of no long duration. (See ver. 29.) In the mean time, this instance of divine lenity is left on record to encourage the first dawnings of our repent-

ance, and to assure us, that our good and gracious God, 'who keepeth mercy for thousands, and forgiveth iniquity, will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax, but bring forth judgment unto truth.'—*Stackhouse*.

27. *And went softly.*]—It is not easy to say what our translators precisely meant by this expression, unless they intended to translate the Latin word, 'sensim,' used by Montanus. Coverdale, following the Vulgate, has 'hanging down the head.' Mathew renders it 'comfortless;' and Cranmer 'barefoot;' in which he is supported by the Chaldee paraphrase, as well as by the Syriac and Arabic versions. Houbigant's version is, 'sighing and groaning;' Dr. Geddes's, 'with a downcast look,' and such appears to be the meaning of the Hebrew word **וְנָחַ**, in the original; for all the expressions in this verse respecting Ahab, the reader will observe, indicate humiliation, sorrow and remorse. See Parkhurst, who, interpreting this text, says, 'he went stooping, looking down, as persons in grief and shame.'

CHAP. XXII. VER. 15. *Go, and prosper; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.*]—This answer to Ahab's question was doubtless spoken ironically, and in mockery of the promises, which the other prophets had made him. The true purport of it seems to be this: 'Since thou art more desirous of pleasing thyself, than of knowing the truth, pursue the advice of thy prophets; expect the success which they promise thee, and prove the truth of their predictions by dear-bought experience.'—*Poole*.

19. *I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, &c.*]—Micaiah evidently gives account in the following verses of what appeared to him in a vision; and many of the circumstances must be considered as parabolical, and described in language adapted to the comprehension of the persons to whom it was addressed.

27. *Bread of affliction, and with water of affliction, &c.*]—That is, with coarse bread, and bad water, just enough to keep him from starving, till Ahab should return crowned with victory; and then, perhaps, he intended to put him to death.

48. *Tharshish.*]—This is the same city which the heathen writers afterward called Tarsus. It had its name originally from Tarshish, one of the sons of Javan, (see Gen. x. 4,) who settled in that part of Asia Minor, which, in the time of St. Paul, was called Cilicia. It begins near the eastern extremity of the Mediterranean sea, and extends along the northern coast as far as Pamphylia. It was bounded on the north by that immense chain of mountains, called Taurus, which stretches, for some hundred miles, nearly from east to west. The city of Tharshish, or Tarsus, stands on the banks of the

river Cydnus, and was in ancient times celebrated for its commerce and its riches. Hence it is that all trading vessels, or merchantmen, are called in the Holy Scriptures 'ships of Tharshish.'

There was also a famous academy at Tarsus, where many eminent men prosecuted their studies. Strabo says of them, that in every branch of literature and philosophy they excelled even those of Alexandria, or Athens; and that Rome itself was indebted to this seminary of learning for some of its best professors. From this circumstance it was, that St. Paul, who was educated in the schools of Tarsus, became such a proficient in the liberal arts and sciences, and so well acquainted with the classical authors of Greece and Rome.

Mr. Bruce, however, is of opinion that the Tarshish here mentioned, as well as Ophir, was in Africa.

II. K I N G S.

INTRODUCTION.

THE history contained in this Book records the government and actions of many successive kings of Judah and Israel, for the space of about three hundred years; commencing from the death of Jehoshaphat, A. M. 3115, and ending with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, A. M. 3416. The connection and occasional quarrels, which subsisted between the two nations during part of this time, till the conquest of Samaria by Shalmaneser, seem to have induced the sacred writer to blend the two histories, as treating in some measure of the same people. Both nations appear to have departed, with almost equal steps, from the service of the true God; and, in the history of both, we are presented with a succession of wicked and idolatrous kings, till each had completed the measure of his iniquity.

Both Israel and Judah, though they invariably experienced prosperity and affliction in proportion to their obedience or disobedience, were infatuated by their perverse inclinations; and, in a long series of their respective sovereigns, we find a few only who were awakened by God's judgments to a sense of their true interest and duty. The whole period seems to have been dark and guilty; the glory of the kingdom being eclipsed by the calamities of the division of the twelve tribes, and by the increasing miseries of idolatry and ambition. Successive tyrannies, treasons, seditions, and usurpations, and

the instant punishment which they produced, served at once to illustrate the evil character of the times, and the vigilant equity of the divine government. The events are described with great simplicity, though in themselves highly interesting and important. The account of Elijah's assumption into heaven; of Elisha's succession to his ministry; and of the series of illustrious miracles performed by Elisha; the story of Naaman, and of the panic flight of the Syrians; the history of Ben-hadad and Hazael; of the predicted death of Ahab and Jezebel, and their children; and of the destruction of Baal's prophets, are all pregnant with instruction, and have furnished themes for frequent dissertation.

We perceive in these impressive histories the characters and qualities of men, painted with the utmost fidelity; and the attributes of God are displayed with great effect. The particulars and circumstances are sketched out with a brief and lively description, and the imagination lingers with pleasure in filling up the striking outlines, that are presented to our view. The sacred author, regardless of minute order, and of the succession of events, seems sometimes desirous only of furnishing us with a view of the state of religion among the people, and of illustrating the genealogy of Christ. In particular, we observe, how the revolt of the ten tribes, and their subsequent captivity, contributed to keep up the distinction of Judah, and to render the accomplishment of the prophecies, which foretold that the Messiah should descend from this branch, more conspicuous and complete. The predictions described as delivered and fulfilled in this Book, are those which foretold the death of Ahaziah; the birth of a son to the Shunammite; the recovery of Naaman; plenty in Samaria; the crimes and cruelty of Hazael; the success of Joash; the defeat of Sennacherib; the prolongation of Hezekiah's life; the Babylonish captivity; and the peaceful reign of Josiah.

After the captivity of the ten tribes, the colony brought up from Babylon, and other places, adopted the Hebrew religion; but blended it with their own idolatries; and, from that time, we hear little of the inhabitants of Samaria. The kingdom of Judah still continued, for above a century, to provoke God's anger by its disobedience and idolatry, notwithstanding Isaiah and many other prophets conspired, during all this period, to exhort the people to repentance, by every motive of interest and fear. The good reign of Hezekiah, though lengthened by divine providence, was too soon succeeded by the 'evil days of Manasseh,' in whose time the temple, and even the volume of the law, seem to have been almost entirely neglected. In the reign of Josiah, religion for a short time revived; the public copy of the law was discovered and read, and idolatry for a few months was suppressed: but the tide of iniquity having rolled back with accumulated force, Jerusalem is besieged and taken, the city and temple are plundered, and the noblest of the nation are led away captive to Babylon. The Book concludes with the account of the second siege by Nebuchadnezzar, which happened about eighteen years after the first. The city and temple were then burnt, and soon after, the whole destruction was completed by the massacre or flight of the remnant, which had been left amidst the ruined cities of Judea.—*Dr. Gray.*

CHAPTER I.

VER. 2. *Through a lattice in his upper chamber.*—It has been already observed, that the roofs of the houses in the east are flat, and surrounded with a sort of balustrade, or railing, with lattice work, which gives them the appearance of lofty terraces, or balconies. The wood-work, in the present case, might have been decayed, and Ahaziah, perhaps, leaning carelessly over it, it gave way, and he fell into the court. His sickness, or 'disease,' as it is called, was occasioned, we may suppose, by the injury which he received from this fall.

2. *Baal-zebub the god of Ekron.*]—The name of this god, or idol, is variously written, and has various significations. Grotius, Scaliger, and others, are of opinion that he was called by the Palestines, or Philistines, and also by other Phœnicians, *Beel-samen*; that is, ‘the god of heaven;’ and that the Hebrews called him Baal-zebub, ‘the god of flies,’ by way of ridicule, because his temple, on account of the victims slaughtered there, was full of flies, which the Hebrews say never came near the temple at Jerusalem. It has been asserted, also, that the true name, which the Philistines gave this idol, was *Beel-zebach*; that is, ‘the god of sacrifice;’ or *Beel-zebaoth*, ‘god of hosts.’ Whatever degree of credit may be given to these different conjectures, the meaning of the word, as it occurs in the Hebrew Scriptures, is supposed to be, ‘the god of flies;’ and he is said to be so called, because he defended people from flies. The Eleans, we read, adored Jupiter as the expeller of flies; and divine honors were afterwards offered to Hercules, under the appellation of Apomyius, which has the same meaning. Another conjecture is, that the fly, or, more probably, the beetle, accompanied the image of this idol, and gave name to it. This insect, it is known, was one of the numerous objects of superstitious worship with the Egyptians, and it occurs frequently on that celebrated relic of antiquity, the Isiac Table. The Septuagint version is *Βααλ μύιας θεον*, ‘Baal the fly-god.’

Pliny says, that there was once a dreadful plague in Africa, occasioned by immense quantities of flies; so that the people sacrificed to the god of Achore, which is supposed to be the same as the idol worshipped at Ekron, and that immediately after, the flies all died.—*Plin. lib. x. cap. 27.*

Dr. Hyde thinks that the Beelzebub of the New Testament is derived from the ancient Jewish and Syriac *Beeldebobu*, or *Beeldevo*, i. e. ‘the god of enmity.’—*Vet. Pers. Relig. Hist. c. viii. p. 160.*—See, also, *Rosenmüller* on Matth. x. 25.

Others are clearly of opinion, that ‘zebub’ is of Arabic derivation, and means generation, or fecundity; and that Baal-zebub therefore was consulted by Ahaziah, who had no children, in preference to all other gods.—See *Weston* on 1 Sam. xii. 10.

We, perhaps, may be a good deal surprised to find, that the ‘driving away of flies,’ should be thought by the inhabitants of Ekron so important, as to give to the idol which they worshipped a name expressive of that power; but this was not the only quality ascribed to him; for it was supposed that the power of predicting such momentous matters, as the continu-

ance of the life of great princes, or their approaching death, also belonged to him. An extract from Vinisauf will serve as a further illustration of this subject.

Speaking of the army under our Richard the First, a little before he left the Holy Land, and describing them as marching on the plain not far from the sea-coast, towards a place called Ybelin, which belonged to the knights-hospitalers of St. John of Jerusalem, pretty near Hebron, he says, 'The army stopping awhile there, rejoicing in the hope of speedily setting out for Jerusalem, were assailed by swarms of small insects, flying about like sparks, which they called *'cincinellæ.'* With these the whole neighbouring region round about was filled. These most wretchedly infested the pilgrims, piercing with great smartness their hands, necks, throats, foreheads, and faces, and every part that was uncovered; a most violent, burning tumor followed the punctures made by them, so that all that they stung looked like lepers.' He adds, 'that they could hardly guard themselves from this most troublesome vexation, by covering their heads and necks with veils.'

What these fire-flies were, and whether they shone in the dark, and for that reason are compared to sparks flying about, or whether they were compared to them on account of the burning heat which they occasioned, as well as a swelling in the flesh of all they wounded, I shall not take upon me to determine. I would only observe, that Richard and his people met with them in that part of the country, which was not very far from Ekron, and which seemed to be of much the same general nature; a plain not far from the sea-coast.

Can we wonder, after this recital, that these poor heathens, who lived in and about Ekron, derived much consolation from the supposed power of the idol whom they worshipped, to drive away the *cincinellæ* of that country, which were so extremely vexatious to those pilgrims of the twelfth century, and occasioned them so much pain? Lord of the fly, lord of the *cincinellæ*, must have appeared to them a very pleasing, and a very important title.—*Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 323—325. See, also, *Bryant*, on the Plagues of Egypt, p. 55—74.

8. *An hairy man.*]—So called, either because the hair of his head and beard was long; or, more probably, because his garment was made of the skins of beasts with the hair on; an habit expressive of the melancholy, which affected the prophets on being employed in denouncing punishments against their own people, and, at the same time, suitable to the doctrine of repentance, which they preached. Hence it was, that the an-

cient prophets are described, Heb. xi. 37, as wandering about in 'sheep-skins and goat-skins.'—See note on this text.

As the common customs of the east have been transmitted to later ages with little variation, Sir J. Chardin is of opinion, that not much alteration has taken place, particularly with respect to the exterior appearances of persons of extraordinary sanctity.

The observations which he has made relating to the resemblance between the modern eastern dervises and fakeers, and the ancient Jewish prophets, both those who were true, and those who falsely assumed that character, are considerably striking. These modern eastern *Religious*, he tells us, go clothed just as Elijah did, who is called 'an hairy man,' on account of his wearing a hairy garment, and was girded with a leathern girdle. In other places, prophets are described as wearing a rough garment, or garment of hair. Sir John repeats the same in making remarks on the vestment of John the Baptist.

The dervises, he gives us to understand, carry about with them the horn of a he-goat, or a wild ox. They wear it as a kind of defence, though some carry hatchets with them; and he supposes that Zedekiah, the son of Chenaanah, who had 'made him horns of iron,' (1 Kings xxii. 11.) considered them as part of his equipage. It is not so understood, in general; but it is rather supposed that they were made by this false prophet, on purpose to exhibit a fallacious sign to Ahab, of his pushing Syria until it was destroyed. Its being, however, at present a part of the equipage of a dervise, may incline one to believe, that it was an instrument which Zedekiah had worn before, and only applied it to this use at that time.

The dervises, he tells us, go bare-headed; and he thinks, from what is said of Elisha, 2 Kings ii. 23, that the prophets must have done the same. On which it may be farther observed, that if the prophets distinguished themselves from other people, in those times, as the dervises do now, these young people were not only guilty of not honoring old age, as the law required, Lev. xix. 32; but of knowingly and intentionally insulting a prophet of God.—See *Harmer*.

9. *A captain of fifty, with his fifty.*—That is, an officer having the command of fifty men, who was sent with his company to Elijah on this occasion.

10. *Let fire come down.*—This would have been better rendered, perhaps, in the future tense, 'fire will come down,' agreeably to the Greek version, which has *καταβησεται πυρ*. By

‘fire’ we must here understand ‘lightning,’ which is called, ver. 12, ‘the fire of God.’

17. *In the second year of Jehoram, &c.*]—‘Although I have retained these words in the text,’ says Dr. Geddes, ‘I consider them either as an interpolation, or as a manifest error contrary to the tenor of history, and not to be reconciled with chap. ii. ver. 1.’ But it seems to be one of the many errors, which have been occasioned by a misapprehension of the numerals used in the Hebrew Scriptures. Instead of ‘the second year,’ the Vatican copy of the Septuagint has, ‘in the eighth year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah.’ This appears to be the true reading. The Hebrew copyist, says Dr. Wall, who was to transcribe this verse, had the name Jehoram at the beginning of it, and Jehoshaphat at the end. He seems to have written Jehoram twice, and to have introduced Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, while Jehoshaphat himself was living, and whom we find, chap. iii, assisting this Jehoram, king of Israel, against his rebellious subjects. See chap. iii. ver. 7. et seq.

CHAP. II. VER. 3. *Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?*]—Some think that ‘the sons of the prophets,’ who ask this question, allude to the manner of sitting in their schools. It appears that the scholars were accustomed to sit below their master’s feet, and he of course, when he taught them, must have been above their heads. Explaining the text with reference to this custom, the meaning of the words will be, that God would deprive Elisha of his master Elijah’s instructions by a sudden death.

9. *Let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.*]—Some think that Elisha requires, that he might have a double portion of Elijah’s prophetic spirit, which would have been arrogant and presuming. On the contrary, he only requests that he may be considered as the eldest, or first-born, among his disciples, the prophets. For the first-born was accustomed to take two parts of the inheritance, whereas the other sons received only one. That the Hebrew word חֵלֶק, is sometimes taken for a ‘portion,’ appears from Deut. xxi. 17.—See *Grotius*.

The Chaldee paraphrase favors this interpretation. Dr. Geddes is in doubt whether the text would not be better rendered by ‘a repetition of thy spirit;’ or ‘a duplicate.’

11. *A chariot of fire, and horses of fire.*]—The generality of commentators are agreed, that this account of Elijah’s translation is not to be taken in a literal sense. It has been said, that we cannot form any distinct idea of a chariot of fire, or of horses of fire; and if we could, such a vehicle would not appear

to be well adapted for a body, that had not yet put off its mortality. But have we any distinct idea of what our great poet means by 'a muse of fire?' One characteristic of the sublime is indistinctness; and another arises from that grandeur of imagery, and vastness of conception, which present no limits to the human mind. Between the opinion of some, who think that Elijah was carried off, like Romulus, by a thunder-storm, and that the other circumstances are nothing more than oriental embellishment; and those who follow the Jewish Rabbis and some of the Christian fathers, through all their fanciful conceits, there is, indeed, a wide difference. (See *Dr. Lightfoot*, vol. i. p. 522, et seq.)

Let us, in reading such passages as these, endeavour to observe a due medium between the extravagancies of superstition, and the follies of scepticism. It would be the height of presumption to imagine, that we can comprehend the various operations of infinite power. On the contrary, we cannot hope, at present, to understand fully the language in which they are recorded, nor the glowing figures of speech, which the inspired writers might have used on extraordinary occasions. On subjects, therefore, not essentially connected with any article of faith, or practice, we might well decline any minute discussions, which would either tend to flatter the presumption of ignorance, or to fetter the powers of reason, while we indulge the mystical reveries of a heated imagination.

12. *The chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!*]—Elisha takes occasion, from the appearance of the fiery chariot and horses that snatched up Elijah, to call him 'the chariot and charioteer of Israel;' that is, their chief guide and protector. Or these expressions may imply, that Elijah, by his example, his counsels, his prayers, and his power with God, effected more for the defence and preservation of Israel, than all the chariots, horses, and other warlike preparations of their kings. See chap. xiii. 14.

15. *When the sons of the prophets—saw him.*]—The pronoun *him*, in this clause, does not refer to the person of the prophet; but to the miracle which had just been performed. The passage, therefore, should have been rendered, 'when they saw this, or it;' unless we consider the sentence as elliptical, and supply after 'him,' 'do this,' or something equivalent.

15. *Which were to view.*]—Rather, 'who were looking out,' &c. See ver. 7.

16. *The Spirit of the Lord.*]—That is, 'The preceding tempest, or thunder-storm.' They wished to search for his body, that they might bury it with funeral honors.—*Dr. Geddes.*

19. *And the ground barren.*]—The marginal reading is, 'Causing to miscarry.' If the latter reading be allowed to be more just than the former, we must entertain a different idea of the situation of Jericho than the textual translation suggests. There are actually at this time cities where animal life, of certain kinds, pines, decays, and dies; and where that posterity, which should replace such loss, is either not conceived, or, if conceived, is not brought to the birth; but if brought to the birth, is fatal in delivery both to the mother and her offspring. An instance of this kind occurs in Don Ulloa's Voyage to South America, vol. i. p. 93. He says of the climate of Porto Bello, that 'it destroys the vigor of nature, and often untimely cuts the thread of life.' And of Sennaar, Mr. Bruce (Trav. vol. iv. p. 469) says, that 'no horse, mule, ass, or any beast of burthen, will breed, or even live at Sennaar, or many miles about it. Poultry does not live there; neither dog nor cat, sheep nor bullock, can there be preserved a season. They must all go, every half-year, to the sands. Though every possible care be taken of them, they die in every place where the fat earth is about the town, during the first season of the rains.' He farther mentions, that the situation is equally unfavorable to the generality of trees.

23. *There came forth little children out of the city.*]—The Hebrew word נערים, signifies young persons that are grown up, as well as little children. Thus Isaac is called נער, Gen. xxii. 12, when he was twenty-eight years old. Joseph was so called when he was thirty, and Rehoboam when he was forty years of age. See note on Gen. xlv. 33. It is probable, that these people came out of the city, and thus insulted the prophet, at the instigation of the priests of Baal. Beth-el was a city strangely addicted to idolatry, and it was here, we read, that Jeroboam set up one of the golden calves, 1 Kings xii. 29. We may suppose, therefore, that its inhabitants had conceived a great aversion to Elisha, as being the successor of that venerable prophet, who had shewn himself so much an enemy to their idolatrous worship. The words, 'go up, thou bald-head,' were uttered, it is probable, with sneers of contempt and derision, in allusion to the ascension of Elijah, of which they doubtless had heard, but which they did not believe.

24. *And cursed them in the name of the Lord.*]—To speak 'in the name of the Lord,' is to deliver what God commands; to prophesy in the name of the Lord, is to foretel what he reveals; and to curse in the name of the Lord, is to declare a curse, which he is determined to inflict, and which he has authorised the prophet to denounce. So that in cursing these persons, Elisha acted as a minister of the Supreme Governor of the world; and by his order, and in his name, he foretold

the punishment that was about to be inflicted on these idolaters. Had this curse proceeded from the angry resentment of the prophet only, and not from a divine impulse, such a signal event as the destruction of these profane young men of Beth-el, as Sanctius observes, would not have been the immediate consequence of it.—See *Poole's Synopsis*.

CHAP. III. VER. 4. *An hundred thousand lambs, &c.*]—Ludolph is of opinion, that this prodigious number of lambs and rams was not a tribute, which the Moabites were obliged to pay annually; but only on some particular occasions; such, for instance, as on the accession of a new king, or at the conclusion of a war.—See *Scheuchzer in loco*.

11. *Which poured water on the hands of Elijah.*]—Mr. Hanway, speaking of a Persian supper, says, (*Trav. vol. i. p. 223.*) ‘Supper being now brought in, a servant presented a bason of water, and a napkin hung over his shoulders; he went to every one in the company, and poured water on their hands to wash.’

14, 15. *Elisha said—Bring me a minstrel: And when the minstrel played, the hand of the Lord came upon him.*]—The soothing, tranquillising effects of music may be observed in the instance of the hypochondriac Saul, 1 Sam. xvi. 23; and we may suppose, that much the same effect was produced in this instance on Elisha. The prophet’s mind was agitated, vexed, and mortified with what he saw around him. Like the apostle Paul at Athens, ‘a keen edge was set on his spirit.’ Thus uneasy and bewildered, he felt himself unfit for supplication to God, or communication from him. To acquire that repose of the passions, and that self-possession, which is the very essence of devotion, the prophet has recourse to the powers of music. A sacred song by its sentiments, and a sacred air by its association of ideas, recalls the wandering thoughts, and fixes them on that object, which is the most interesting to devout contemplation. We cannot suppose that the gift of prophecy was imparted by music, for then, à fortiori, the person who played must have received it also: but a state of solemn sedateness of mind was solicited by the prophet, as a preliminary to the advent of the prophetic spirit.

Cicero tells us (*Tusc. iv.*) that ‘the Pythagoreans were used to tranquillise their minds, and to compose their thoughts and imaginations by means of music and singing.’

Whoever has felt and considered the energies of devotion, is convinced of the necessity that those energies should occupy the whole mind; which should be in a calm, settled, composed state, to admit the first risings of serious thought, no less than to encourage its full effects: and, if such a person be liable to the hurry of temporal business, to the clash of jarring opinions,

or the din of arms, he will earnestly wish, when he desires to cultivate devout affections, for that tranquillising power, which accompanied the serious strains of music, when played before Elisha.—See Expos. Index to Bible, p. 113.

16, 17. The scarcity of water in the east is well known to our readers; and that an army should be distressed for want of it, is by no means unusual. This history of procuring it, adds another instance to the gracious interpositions of divine power. But to understand the text, we must notice the direction of the prophet, ‘dig ditches in this valley;’ or rather, ‘many ditches;’ for the word corresponding with ‘ditches’ is repeated in the original. It was then a ‘valley,’ where a current of water might pass, and where it might be collected; or where, on digging, it might be expected to be found. The reader may see on the journeys of Israel, &c. to mount Sinai, Exod. xiii. &c. the nature of the valleys in that district; and that many of them, furnish water, on being dug only to a slight depth. The word נַחַל, rendered ‘valley,’ often means ‘torrent.’ Here, it probably signifies the hollow, or ravine, bounded by the two banks, between which it lies. See *Arias Montanus*.

We may imagine that ‘ditches,’ such as were usually dug in similar places, were now dug in this valley. They were dug, it should seem, over-night, but no water was found in them then: however, the next morning, water was seen to come ‘by the way of Edom;’ and these ditches, trenches, pits, &c. being ready, received and retained the salubrious streams.

It appears that the waters now received by the Hebrews came from Edom, a mountainous country, as we learn from Numb. xxii. 22; Mal. i. 3. The fact, therefore, proves to be, that rain had fallen at a distance, during the night; and had been providentially directed to take that course among the mountains. After quitting them, it was led to the trenches, cut in the valley where Israel was now encamped. Our inference is, that the prophetic impulse on the mind of Elisha rather constitutes this miracle, than the actual fall of rain; as we have seen, on other occasions, that predictions of natural phenomena are in their nature supernatural; and that time, place, and circumstances, contribute greatly to characterise events so miraculous.

We cannot peruse Maundrell’s Travels in Syria, or any accounts of torrents among mountains, without perceiving the justness of this observation. The reader has observed the readiness with which some of these valleys yield water, when the sand is dug into, to the depth of a foot, or a foot and a half. This may throw some light on the expressions used, Numb. xxi. 18.

The deception of the Moabites, who thought this water to be 'blood,' was occasioned by the situation of the sun, in respect to the station of their observation that morning. The reflection of the rays of the sun in water, at his rising, or setting, often gives to the water a red appearance, which is more or less deeply crimsoned, according to circumstances. The Moabites, knowing there had been no water in that valley, or torrent, the day preceding, and that no rain had fallen near during the night, hastily concluded that what they saw was blood: their mistake proved fatal to them.—Expos. Index to Bible.

It is much more probable, that the water was discolored by the red earth over which it flowed. The country was called Edom, from the redness of its earth, perhaps, as well as from the Red sea, which formed one of its principal boundaries.

17. *Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain.*—Rain is often in the east preceded by a squall of wind. The editor of the Ruins of Palmyra tells us, that they seldom have rain except at the equinoxes; and that nothing could be more serene than the sky all the time that he was there, except one afternoon, when there was a small shower, preceded by a whirlwind, which took up such quantities of sand from the desert, as quite darkened the sky. (p. 37.) Thus, Elisha told the king of Israel, 'Ye shall not see wind nor rain, yet that valley shall be filled with water.' The circumstance of the wind taking up such a quantity of sand as to darken the sky, may serve to explain 1 Kings xviii. 45. 'The heaven was black with clouds and wind.' The circumstance of the wind prognosticating rain is also referred to, Prov. xxv. 14, 'Whoso boasteth himself of a false gift,' pretending to give something valuable, and disappointing the expectation, 'is like clouds and wind without rain.'

19. *And mar every good piece of land with stones.*—That is, prevent it from being tilled, under a threat of destruction, by fixing stones in it as a lasting token of enmity. See note on Job v. 23.

21. *And upward.*—The meaning is, that all were assembled, who were not too young to put on armour; and all who exceeded the time of life when men usually bore arms, which was, as we learn from various parts of the Pentateuch, at the age of twenty.

25. *Felled all the good trees.*—In times of war, it was formerly very common for one party to injure the other by destroying their valuable trees. Thus, the Moabites were punished; and thus the Arabs of the Holy Land still make war on each other, burning the corn, cutting down the olive-trees, &c.—Hasselquist, Trav. p. 143.

The Hebrew adjective טוב, which we generally translate 'good,' primarily signifies 'fertile, prolific;' hence we may naturally suppose, that, by 'good trees,' in Scripture, are meant fruit-trees.

26. *That drew swords.*]—Rather, 'sword in hand.'

27. *And offered him for a burnt-offering.*]—It was a custom with the heathens to sacrifice human victims, and even their own children, in order to avert great national calamities. Porphyry, according to Eusebius, informs us, that the Phœnicians were much addicted to this horrid sacrifice; and Plutarch relates, that the Lacedæmonians, when afflicted with a dreadful pestilence, were ordered by the oracle of Apollo to sacrifice a virgin of noble birth, as the means of arresting its progress.

The classical story of Iphigenia is well known. Tertullian says, that the Scythians sacrificed human beings to Diana, the Gauls to Mercury, and the Africans to Saturn. As to what particular deity this idolatrous monarch devoted his eldest son, as a burnt-offering, commentators are not agreed in their opinions. Some think, with Grotius, that it was to the God of Israel, in imitation of Abraham. Others, with more probability, suppose that it was to Baal, to the sun, to Moloch, or to the idol-god of his country, Chemosh. Compare Numb. xxi. 29.

CHAP. IV. VER. 1. *The creditor is come to take unto him my two sons, to be bondmen.*]—The Jewish law considered children as the property of their parents, who had power to sell them for seven years, as their creditors had to compel them to do it, in order to pay their debts. From the Jews, this custom extended to the Athenians, and from them to the Romans.

8. *A great woman.*]—Some commentators imagine, that she was powerful, and had large possessions; but the Chaldee paraphrase, as well as the Arabic and Syriac versions, give us to understand, that she was distinguished for her virtues and her piety.

10. *A little chamber.*]—To most houses in the East there is a smaller one annexed, which usually rises one story higher than the principal dwelling; sometimes it consists of one or two rooms only and a terrace, while others, that are built (as they frequently are) over the porch, or gateway, have (if we except the ground-floor) all the conveniences that belong to the house, properly so called. There is a door of communication from them into the gallery of the house, kept open or shut at the discretion of the master of the family, beside another door, which opens immediately from a private staircase, down into the porch, or street, without giving the least disturbance to the house. These back-houses are known by the name of Olee, or Oleah, (for the house, properly so called, is *dar*, or *beet*) and in

them strangers are usually lodged and entertained. Here also the sons of the family are permitted to keep their concubines; and to these apartments men usually retire from the hurry and noise of their families, to be more at leisure for meditation, or diversions. At other times, they are used for wardrobes and magazines.

The Oleah of Holy Scripture, being literally the same appellation, is accordingly so rendered in the Arabic version. We may suppose it, therefore, to have been a structure of the like contrivance. Consequently, the little chamber that was built by the Shunammite for Elisha (whither, as the text instructs us, he retired at his pleasure, without breaking in upon the private affairs of the family, or being in his turn interrupted by them in his devotions); the summer chamber of Eglon, which, in the same manner with these, seems to have had privy stairs belonging to it, by means of which Ehud escaped; the chamber over the gate, (whither, for the greater privacy, king David withdrew himself to weep for Absalom); and that upon whose terrace Ahaz, for the same reason, erected his altars; seem all to have been structures of the like nature and contrivance with these Olees.—Dr. *Shaw's Travels*, p. 280.

13. *And he said unto him, Say now unto her, &c.*—There is a degree of honest impatience in these words, such as was natural to a good man, who would not be behindhand with his benefactor; but the Shunammite, having learned to set bounds to her desires, answers, ‘I dwell among mine own people.’ ‘The intended kindness is far from being small; but it is not useful to me. I live here, as thou art witness, in peace, in a contented obscurity, not so high as to provoke envy, nor so low as to be trodden down and despised. It is fit, O holy man of God, that I should learn some time or other to set bounds to my desires; and if I cannot fix them now, when I have already more than my wants require, when shall I hope to do it?’ It is fit that we remember, that virtue and true wisdom lie in the middle of extremes; on the one hand, not to neglect and despise riches so as to forget ourselves, and on the other, not to pursue and love them so as to forget God; to have them sometimes in our hands, but always something more important in our hearts.—*Sterne*.

16. *According to the time of life.*—That is, according to the time, ordained by the laws of nature, for the gestation of a child in the womb. This text strongly corroborates the interpretation of Gen. xviii. 14, respecting Sarah.

19. *My head, my head!*—It is not improbable, from this peculiar exclamation, and the season of the year, that the Shu-

nammite's son had received what is called a 'coup de soleil,' or a stroke of the sun, which is by no means uncommon in hot climates, and which often proves fatal. Compare Judith viii. 3.

23. *It is neither new moon, nor sabbath.*]—Peter Della Vallé assures us, (Travels into Arabia Deserta, p. 258.) that it is now customary in that country to begin their journeys at the new moon. When the Shunammite proposed going to Elisha, her husband dissuaded her by observing, that it was neither new-moon, nor sabbath. It appears also from the text, that it was usual at this time to visit the prophets, and probably to make them presents of victuals.

24. *Then she saddled an ass, and said to her servant, Drive, and go forward.*]—Asses were much used for riding; and Pococke tells us, (vol. i. p. 191.) 'that the man' (the husband, I suppose, he means) 'always leads the lady's ass, and if she has a servant, he goes on one side; but the ass-driver follows the man, goads on the beast, and when he is to turn, directs his head with a pole.' The Shunammite, when she went to the prophet, did not desire so much attendance; but only requested her husband to send her an ass and its driver, to whom she said, 'Drive, and go forward.'—Harmer.

29. *If thou meet any man, salute him not, &c.*]—Elisha's enjoining Gehazi not to salute any one that he met, or to return the salutation of such, evidently expresses the haste that he would have him make to recover the child, and bring him back to life; for the salutations of the east often take up a long time.

The manner of salutation, as now practised by the people of Egypt, is not less ancient. The ordinary way of saluting people, when at a distance, is bringing the hand down to the knees, and then raising it up to the stomach. They mark their devotedness to a person by holding down the hand; as they do their affection by afterward raising it as high as the heart. When they come close together, they then take each other by the hand in token of friendship. What is very pleasant, is to see the country-people reciprocally clapping each other's hands very smartly, twenty or thirty times together, on meeting, without saying any thing more than 'Salamat aiche halcom;' that is, 'How do you do? I wish you good health.' If this form of complimenting must be acknowledged to be simple, it must be admitted also to be very affectionate. Perhaps it marks out a better disposition of heart, than all the studied phrases, which are in use among us, and which politeness almost always makes use of at the expense of sincerity. After this first compliment, many other friendly questions are asked, about the health of the

family, mentioning each of the children distinctly, whose names they know, &c.

If the forms of salutation, among the ancient Jewish peasants, took up as much time as those of the modern Egyptians, who belong to that rank of life, it is no wonder that the prophet commanded his servant to abstain from saluting those he might meet with, when sent to restore the child of the Shunammite to life. They who have attributed this order to haste have done right: but they ought to have shewn the tediousness of eastern compliments.—*Id.* vol. ii. p. 331.

39. *And one went out into the field to gather herbs.*—To account for this circumstance, why the herbs were gathered in the field, and not in the garden, it may be observed from Dr. Russell, that at Aleppo, beside the herbs and vegetables produced in regularly cultivated gardens, the fields afford bugloss, mallows, and asparagus, which they use as pot-herbs, with some others, that are eaten in salads.

39. *And found a wild vine.*—Probably this was the *Coloquintida* plant, or the *Cucumis colocynthis* of Linnæus, which is extremely bitter, and of a very purgative quality. The Hebrew word, צִנְצִינָה, may signify any plant that grows in the manner of a vine.

42. *Twenty loaves of barley.*—Had these loaves been of the same size as our quartern loaves, they might have afforded a sufficient repast for a hundred men; but it is well known, that the loaves of bread, in the east, are extremely small, and not unlike what our penny-rolls used to be.

CHAP. V. VER. 15. *A blessing.*—That is, ‘a gift, or present.’

17. *Two mules’ burden of earth.*—It is probable, that this extraordinary request was made for the purpose of erecting an altar, or tumulus, on which he might offer sacrifice to the God of Israel. Sir J. Chardin thinks that Naaman desired this as sacred earth, taken from hallowed places to pray upon, as the Mohammedans do, having their beads made of earth, which they deem sacred. In praying, also, they bow themselves down upon a small quantity of the same earth.

18. *In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant.*—There are good grounds to think, that the eastern princes of ancient times did not rigorously insist, that their great ministers should worship the Deity after the same religious rites and forms with themselves. We must not suppose that Joseph, when he dwelt in Egypt, or Moses, when he was educated there, or David, whilst he bore arms under Achish, king of Gath, or Daniel, while he was in the court of Babylon, or Nehemiah, under Artaxerxes, was at all required to comply with the king’s religion,

Naaman, it is true, discovers his apprehensions by his discourse, that he should still be obliged, as formerly, to accompany his master to the pagan temple, which he humbly hopes God will not impute to him as a sin, because he would take care to perform no act of religion there. This shews the sincerity of his conversion, and how cautious he was of doing any thing, which might seem to be inconsistent with it. He feared it would look like disloyalty to the God of Israel, the thought of which made him uneasy. But the prophet, who was enlightened by the divine spirit, saw that no hardship would be put upon him, but that the king his master would treat him with that clemency and tenderness, which was common from princes to their favorites in such cases.

It would have been a contradiction to his character, and an unworthy conclusion of the heavenly things, which were just now said and done, if the prophet had neglected to assert any part of the honor of God, when a case was proposed which affected it, and when he had so fair an invitation to declare his judgment respecting it. Those who do not perceive this to be the prophet's meaning, may draw such conclusions from this passage as are very prejudicial to religion and a good conscience. Some may flatter themselves, that they are allowed to bend their religion to their worldly circumstances, and that they may dissemble, or temporise, and do those things which they secretly condemn, rather than lose their preferment, and, by adhering to truth, bring themselves and their families to poverty. This is a dangerous way of reasoning, and cannot be founded on the passage before us.—*Reading.*

Naaman was well apprised, that it was a sin to bow down before an idol. All he wanted was to be instructed and encouraged to declare openly that the God of Israel was the true God, and the only One to be adored: by these means he would propagate his faith to others.

Mr. Richard Brown, by rendering the Hebrew verbs in the past tense, which is perfectly allowable, has proved the following to be the true translation:—‘In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master went into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaned on my hand, and I worshipped in the house of Rimmon; in that I have worshipped in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing. And he said unto him, ‘Go in peace,’ i. e. God will accept of thy repentance.—*Bp. Wilson.*

For further information see Poole's Synopsis.

24. *When he came to the tower.*—This was, probably, some elevated spot on the boundaries of the two kingdoms, where

sentinels were always stationed, to give the alarm, in case of invasion. The Hebrew word **מִצְדָּה**, here used, does not signify 'a tower,' but an eminence, or rising ground, on which, however, some building, it is probable, was erected. The Septuagint translation has, 'when he came to a dark, secret place.' So also the Chaldee paraphrase, and the ancient versions. Dr. Geddes's translation is, 'On coming to the barrier, he took from them the things; and stowed them in a house.'

26. *Went not mine heart with thee, &c.*]—Dr. Geddes's translation is, 'Was not I, in spirit, present, when the man came back from his chariot to meet thee, at the time when thou receivedst the money? So, now, thou mayest purchase garments, and olive-yards, and vine-yards, and flocks and herds, and men-servants and maid-servants: but the leprosy of Naaman shall stick to thee and to thy seed for ever.' So, also, Houbigant.

26. *Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, &c.*]—'Is it a time to think of purchasing and getting riches, &c. when this nation, for its sins, is going to be carried away captive?' which, it is probable, Elisha had often told Gehazi.

The wickedness of men serves to promote the glory of God. This action of Gehazi served to confirm Naaman in the religion which he had lately embraced.—*Bp. Wilson.*

27. *The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, und unto thy seed for ever.*]—A sentence which Gehazi justly deserved; for his crime was aggravated by a greedy covetousness, which is idolatry; profanation of God's name; a species of theft, in taking that to himself which was given for others; deliberate and impudent lying; a contempt of God's omnipotence, justice and holiness; and reproach cast upon the venerable prophet and his religion. Let us learn from hence, that God knows our sins, though committed in secret, and will punish them; and, particularly, let us remember, that his wrath pursues not only the unrighteous, but all those in general, who are given to covetousness or dishonest gain; and that riches acquired by wicked means carry a curse with them, which often descends from parents to their children.—See *Poole*, and *Ostervald*.

'For ever' means here, and in many other places of Sacred Scripture, 'a long time;' i. e. three or four generations.

CHAP. VI. VER. 8. *In such and such a place shall be my camp.*]—Houbigant, following the Vulgate, the Arabic, and Syriac versions, instead of 'shall be my place,' reads, 'I will lie in ambush.'

10. *Not once nor twice.*]—This form of expression means 'frequently.'

11. *Will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?*]—He suspected that there was treachery among his people, and that some one of them had betrayed his counsels and intentions to the king of Israel.

18. *With blindness.*]—That is, with mental blindness and delusion; so that they might not know where they were. Perhaps they were enveloped with a thick mist, as the Syriac and Arabic versions lead us to suppose.

23. *Came no more.*]—We must understand, ‘for the present,’ or ‘for some time.’

25. *An ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver.*]—If we reckon these pieces of silver as half-shekels, at fifteen pence each, they amount to five pounds sterling; a great price for what had so little meat on it, and that too, according to the law, unclean. See Lev. xi. 26. In times of famine, however, and extreme necessity, the Jews themselves were absolved from the observation of the Levitical law; nor are there wanting instances in history, of other people, who, on similar occasions, have been reduced to the same distress. Plutarch, in the life of Artaxerxes, tells us, that in that prince's war with the Caducii, an ass's head could scarcely have been purchased at the price of sixty drachmas; i. e. two pounds five shillings of our money.

A cab, according to the Jews, contained as much as the shells of twenty-four eggs would hold; a fourth part of this therefore could not have been a pint of our measure. The word rendered ‘doves' dung,’ is supposed by some commentators to mean a kind of plant called Ornithogalum, according to Linnaeus; or, in English, Bethlehem's star: but Bochart has satisfactorily shewn, that it signifies ‘vetches,’ or ‘pulse.’ Accordingly, some late travellers inform us, that at Grand Cairo and Damascus, there are magazines where they constantly fry this kind of grain, which those who go a pilgrimage buy, and take with them as part of the provisions for their journey. The Arabs, at present, call this kind of pulse, or vetches, by the name of ‘doves' dung.’—See Bochart, Hieroz. p. ii. l. i. c. 7; and Jewish Coins, &c. in Prolegom. No. xvi.

The five pieces of silver mentioned in this verse, are supposed to have been worth about six shillings and threepence of our money. If considered as shekels, they would be equal to about double this sum.

32. *Elisha sat in his house.*]—Probably this was the school of the prophets, where he presided and taught. Compare ch. vi. 1, 2.

32. *Hold him fast at the door.*]—This means, that he should

stop the messenger at the door; because his master was following, who would revoke the order.

33. *The messenger came down.*]—Dr. Geddes suspects that the text is here corrupt, and reads, ‘While he was yet talking with them, lo, the king himself came down to him, and said,’ &c. which clears the passage of obscurity.

33. *Behold, this evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?*]—These words seem to have been spoken by the king in a fit of despair. He could not but acknowledge, that the evil was from the Lord; but declared he had no hopes of redress, since they were driven to such extremities, that women eat their own children.—*Bp. Patrick.*

In order to supply the seeming deficiency in the text, as it stands at present, we may suppose, that the prophet had admonished the king of Israel to wait for the Lord, agreeably to the exhortation of the holy Psalmist, Ps. xxvii. 14. ‘Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.’

CHAP. VII. VER. 1. *Two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria.*]—It appears from this, and other texts, that in ancient times, they held their markets in their gates; where, we read, a measure of fine flour was to be sold for a shekel. There is no reason why the gate should be mentioned, if it were not considered as the public market, where the spoils of the Syrians were to be sold. In their gates then, or in a void space at the entrance of their gates, (see 1 Kings xxii. 10.) they held their markets, and also their courts of judicature. Afterwards, when their gates were not used for these purposes, the same place that served for the one was made use of for the other. Compare Acts xvi. 19.

People then might ‘sit in the gate’ anciently for conversation and diversion, as they do now, among the Arabs, in markets and fairs. It seems most natural to interpret Lot’s sitting in the gate, Gen. xix. 1, after this manner. Certainly he did not sit there as a magistrate; for had that been his character, the people would not have reproached him, though a stranger, with ‘setting up to be a judge,’ ver. 9; nor can we imagine, that he sat there purposely to invite all strangers to his house; for that would have been carrying his hospitality to excess; it being enough for one in private life to receive such as came in his way. He seems then to have placed himself there for amusement and society.

If we suppose the Jews were accustomed to have moral and wise discourses in their gates, as the Arabs are supposed by Hariri to have had in public places, and as the Athenian phi-

losophers are supposed by St. Luke to have held in their markets, (Acts xvii. 17, 18,) there will appear a much greater energy in those words of Solomon than is commonly apprehended, Prov. i. 20, 21. 'Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates,' &c. and again, ch. viii. 3. 'She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city,' &c.—See *Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 457.

2. *If the Lord would make windows in heaven, &c.*—Instead of this, Montanus, the Vulgate, and the Septuagint, read, 'If the Lord were to make cataracts in heaven, could this happen?' This man, in his incredulity, seemed to ask, whether, if God chose to rain corn down from heaven, as he had formerly caused it to rain manna, for the sustenance of the Israelites, this circumstance could happen. The Hebrew measure סאה, 'Seah,' mentioned ver. 1, was the thirtieth part of an omer, and contained somewhat more than a peck of our measure.

13. *Behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel, &c.*—Our translation is here obscure. The meaning is, perhaps, as Dr. Geddes renders the passage, 'Let us take two of the five horses that remain here (for of the many that were in Israel these only remain unconsumed), and let us send to see.' The Chaldee paraphrase favors the interpretation of Houbigant; 'It will not happen otherwise to them, than to all the multitude of Israel, which now remains, or to all the multitude of Israel which now perishes.' That is, whatever happens to them, they will be in the same condition with us; for if they survive, we shall survive; but if they perish, we shall perish also. The Septuagint version makes the whole relate to the five horses which alone were left, and which the people, in their great distress, had not yet eaten.

CHAP. VIII. VER. 1. *A famine, and it shall also come upon the land seven years.*—Hence we see that the late wonderful deliverance had no effect on the lives of the people, who continued deaf to all the prophet's admonitions, and shut their eyes against his miracles. Therefore God punished them with a more grievous famine than that in the days of Ahab, which continued only three years. The Jews will have this to be the terrible famine mentioned by the prophet Joel; four years of which were caused by noxious creatures devouring all the fruits of the earth, and the other three by a want of rain sufficient for vegetation.

3. *To cry.*—'To cry,' here means to offer an humble petition with all the fervency of prayer. See 2 Sam. xix. 28. The same phrase sometimes means 'to complain.'

10. *Go, say unto him, Thou mayest certainly recover, &c.]—*‘Go, say, thou shalt certainly not live; for,’ &c.—*Dr. Waterland.*

Dr. Kennicott is of the same opinion. See his first Dissert. p. 163. Houbigant thinks that ours is the right translation, and that the words contain a silent reproof from Elisha, who well knew that a courtier, like Hazael, would certainly flatter his king; and therefore the meaning, according to his interpretation, is, ‘Go thou, and,’ courtier-like, ‘say to him, You will certainly recover; Howbeit, the Lord hath shewn me, very much the contrary; that he will surely die, and die by thy traiterous hand.’ See ver. 15, and *Dr. Waterland’s Scrip. Vind.* part ii. p. 122.

13. *Is thy servant a dog, &c.]—*The great external purity, which is so studiously attended to by the modern eastern people, as well as the ancient, produces some odd circumstances with respect to dogs.

They do not suffer them in their houses, and even with care avoid touching them in the streets, which would be considered as a defilement. One would imagine, under these circumstances, as dogs do not appear to be necessary in their cities, that there would be very few of them. They are, notwithstanding, found there in great numbers, and crowd the streets. They do not appear to belong to particular persons, as our dogs do, nor to be fed distinctly by such as might claim some interest in them; but get their food as they can. At the same time, they consider it right to take care of them; and charitable people frequently give money every week, or month, to butchers and bakers to feed them at stated times; and some leave legacies at their deaths for the same purpose. This is Le Bruyn’s account. Thevenot and Maillet mention something of the same sort.

In like manner, dogs seem to have been looked upon among the Jews in a disagreeable light, as it appears from this text, 1 Sam. xvii. 43, and other passages of Scripture; yet they had them in considerable numbers in their cities, Psal. lix. 14. They were not, however, shut up in houses, or courts, Psal. lix. 6, 14; but seem to have been forced to seek their food where they could find it, Psal. lix. 15; to which I may add, that some care of them seems to be indirectly enjoined the Jews, Exod. xxii. 31; circumstances which are more satisfactorily illustrated by travellers into the east, than by any commentators whatever.—*Harmer*, vol. i. p. 444. See note on 2 Sam. iii. 8.

15. *And it came to pass on the morrow, that he took a thick cloth.]—*There is some ambiguity in our translation. Com-

mentators in general think that the pronoun 'he' relates to Hazael; but Dr. Geddes is decidedly of opinion, that we should understand by it, his master, Ben-hadad, who, encouraged by the reported answer of Elisha, makes use of a violent remedy to allay the heat of his fever, and puts over his face, not a thick cloth, but a net dipped in water, which was used in those warm countries, as a necessary piece of bed-furniture, to keep off flies and other insects. See note on 1 Sam. xix. 13. This cold application suddenly checked the perspiration, we may suppose, and his death was the consequence.

26. *Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign.*—This should be remembered, as it serves to correct a great mistake made by the Hebrew scribe in the parallel text, 2 Chron. xxii. 2, where it is said, that 'forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign.'

CHAP. IX. VER. 11. *Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?*—There were several reasons which might induce Jehu's officers to form a contemptuous opinion of the prophets. The Jews say, that there was something in their looks and gestures, which made them pass for mad-men among those who did not know them; and this is agreeable to what we read of Saul, who lay uncovered a whole day and night while the spirit was upon him, 1 Sam. xix. 24. The holy prophet, Jeremiah, also, informs us, chap. xxix. 26, that the principal men of the tribe of Judah treated the prophets of the Lord as fools and mad-men. What might still add to the strangeness of their figure and behaviour, was the uncouthness of their dress, their solitary mode of life, and the circumstance of their seldom appearing in public, except on some very extraordinary occasions, which, in latter times, often exposed them to danger, imprisonment, and death.

17. *There stood a watchman on the tower in Jezreel.*—It was customary, not only in war, but also in times of peace, to station sentinels, or watchmen, on some eminence near the place wherever the king was, to prevent his being surprised; and Joram, we may naturally suppose, would observe with the strictest vigilance any troop or company that appeared, more especially in the direction of Ramoth-gilead, because his army was encamped there.

22. *The whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts, &c.*—By 'whoredoms,' it is probable, 'idolatries' are meant; and by 'witchcrafts,' we may understand what the Septuagint expresses by the word *Φαρμακα*, which comprehends every deception and abuse, that was practised by philtres or love-potions, medicaments, drugs, and poisons.

26. *The blood of Naboth, and the blood of his sons.*—We do

not find in the history of Naboth any mention of the death of his sons: but as this man had been accused of high treason, it is probable, that all his family were involved in the same crime. It seems some confirmation of this opinion, that the prophet Elijah never reminded the king of restoring the vineyard to Naboth's children; a circumstance which is not easily accounted for, but on the supposition that there were no heirs left.

30. *She painted her face.*]—This is rendered in the margin, 'put her eyes in painting.' The word פִּיט, translated 'painting,' signifies a mineral substance, called stibium, or stimmi; otherwise plumbago, or black-lead, a kind of ochre of very fine and loose parts. The word occurs again, Jer. iv. 30, and both there as well as here, it is mentioned as something with which women colored their eyes. At present, the women in many parts of the east tinge their eyes with black to heighten their beauty.

The ingenious writer of the 'Agreement of the Customs between the East Indians and Jews,' well illustrates this matter. 'Ezekiel,' says he, 'describing the idolatry of Jerusalem, under the figure of a lewd woman, accuses her of rubbing her eye-lids with black-lead, when her lovers came to wait upon her.' Ezekiel xxiii. 40. This is what we find also that Jezebel did, on purpose to please Jehu, and to shun by these means that death, which she knew her crimes had well deserved. 'She painted her eye-lids, or her eyes, with black-lead, and put ornaments upon her head.' If we may judge of this practice by our fashions, it was not very fit to render women more enticing; yet the custom is still in use among some Indian women, who, to heighten the lustre of their complexion, and to render their eyes more languishing, paint them round with black-lead.—See *Tavernier's Travels into Persia*; *Russell's Natural History of Aleppo*; and *Dr. Shaw's Travels*.

The last-mentioned author observes, that this practice was used by the Greeks and Romans, as well as by the eastern nations; and to this Juvenal plainly refers, Sat. ii. v. 93. He informs us, also, that there was generally but one window, or balcony, towards the street in the houses of the Orientalists, (the rest looking towards the quadrangle, or court,) which was never opened except on great solemnities; and such was the window, or balcony, at which Jezebel appeared. He farther says, that the Moorish ladies tinge their eye-lids with the powder of lead ore. The sooty color which is thus communicated to the eyes, is thought to add a great degree of beauty to persons of all complexions. See a learned and satisfactory note on this subject, in *Parkhurst's Heb. Lexicon*, under the word פִּיט.

CHAP. X. VER. 1. *Ahab had seventy sons.*]—It is probable that grandsons are included in this number. This, in Scripture language, is by no means unusual.

1. *And sent to Samaria.*]—Rather, ‘sent to the rulers and elders of Samaria,’ agreeably to the Septuagint and Vulgate. In all probability, Jezreel in this verse has been erroneously written for Samaria; for Jehu was at Jezreel when he sent these letters.

9. *I conspired against my master, and slew him; but who slew all these?*]—Beside the accomplishment of the divine decree, Jehu’s further design, in requesting this cruel service of the rulers of the nation, was, that he might involve them in the same crime with himself. By the murder of Ahab’s kinsmen, they were deprived of any person of distinction to head them. By this expedient also Jehu thought he should, in some measure, lessen the odium of his own barbarous and perfidious conduct; and this is the sense of his appeal to the people.—See *Calmet*.

14. *The pit of the shearing-house.*]—The Hebrew is *בית עקר*; that is, ‘the tie-house.’ This was probably a shed, or out-house, where they tied the sheep, for the purpose of milking, washing, and shearing them. See the Marginal Reading.

15. *Give me thine hand.*]—We are not to suppose that Jehu asked him for his hand, merely to assist him in getting into his chariot; but that Jehonadab might give him an assurance that he would assist him in the prosecution of his designs: for ‘giving the hand’ is considered as a pledge of friendship and fidelity, or a form of entering into a contract, among all nations.

21. *So that there was not a man left that came not.*]—It may be asked how all the worshippers of Baal, after Jehu’s conduct, could be induced to assemble together? To which it may be replied, that as Jehu was a person of known indifference in matters of religion, who, in this respect, had always conformed to the humors of the court, and in the reign of king Ahab had been a strenuous worshipper of Baal; the people, when they read his proclamation of a great feast to Baal, could not tell but that he had returned to the religion which he once embraced, and which he only deserted, for a while, in compliance with others. But whether they deluded themselves with this persuasion, or not, they knew by experience that Jehu was a man of a fierce and cruel disposition, who would not fail to put his threats in execution; and therefore reading in the same proclamation, ‘whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live,’ ver. 19, they found themselves reduced to this distressing dilemma, either to go, or die. They thought it the wiser

method, therefore, to run the hazard, and throw themselves on his mercy; having this, at least, to plead for themselves, that they were not disobedient to his commands.—See *Calmet*, and *Poole*.

22. *Bring forth vestments.*]—It was the custom of idolaters, to be very curious about the external pomp of their ceremonies, in which the chief part of their worship consisted. All the priests of Baal were clothed in fine linen, and their chief priests probably had some particular ornaments to distinguish them. Baal and Astarte were Phœnician deities. Silius Italicus, (lib. i.) in his description of the feasts of Hercules, has given us an account of the manner in which the Phœnician priests were habited. We may suppose that the dress of the priests of Baal was much of the same kind. The ‘worshippers of Baal’ in the text, cannot mean all the people in general, because they wore no distinct garments in their worship, either of God, or Baal, but the priests and ministers only. These were the great supporters of the present idolatry; and therefore Jehu concluded that if he once destroyed them, all the common worshippers would fall away of course. Taking the words ‘servants’ and ‘worshippers,’ (verses 19, 21.) in their utmost latitude, we need not doubt, but that the temple of Baal, which was built in the capital city, and near the royal palace, would be large and capacious enough to contain them all: for being the chief of its kind, it was intended for the use of the king and queen, and particularly adapted, we may suppose, for such great solemnities. In addition to the principal building, there might have been several courts, also, belonging to it, where the people stood while they worshipped, as they did in the temple-service at Jerusalem; and these, together with the temple itself, would afford sufficient space for all the idolaters of that kind, who were then in the kingdom. It should be remembered, also, that since the days of Ahab, by the ministry of Elijah, Elisha, and the rest of the prophets, as well as by the slaughter, which Hazael in his wars against Israel had made among many of them, the number of Baal’s worshippers had been greatly diminished.—See *Bp. Patrick*, and *Poole*.

24. *Appointed.*]—That is, ‘stationed,’ or ‘posted.’

27. *Brake down the house of Baal, and made it a draught-house.*]—The dishonoring of places, which were treated with veneration by others, by making use of them for the common discharges of animal nature, was an ancient mode of expressing disgust; and in eastern countries it still continues.

Jehu thus treated the temple of Baal: ‘he made it a draught-house.’ Every one will suppose what a draught-house means,

especially if he recollects these words in St. Matthew, 'Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth, goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?' ch. xv. 17.

Sir John Chardin observes somewhere in his MS. that the eastern people are more exquisite in taking vengeance than those in the west. This seems to be a proof of it. We strike off the heads of those images that have been superstitiously abused, set up in, or about, places of worship; we have pulled down, or defaced, buildings which we detested; the stone coffin of a prince, whose memory was execrated, has been made use of as a watering-trough for horses; but I do not remember that any sacred place has been designedly, among us, made what our version calls a 'draught-house.' This custom has been retained, however, in the east; and we are informed, that Abbas the Great, king of Persia, having conquered Bagdad, treated the tomb of Hanifah, one of the fathers of the church among the Turks, after a similar manner.

They who consider the great neatness of eastern tombs, and the prayers that are poured out so frequently at the graves of their holy men, so that a tomb and an oratory are frequently much the same thing, will perceive that there is a greater likeness between the two stories than may appear at first sight.—*Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 422.

28. *Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.*]—And he was never after worshipped in Israel: but this prince's zeal was not sincere. As far as it was agreeable to his own interest and passions, he was zealous for the Lord, but no farther. He would not, for political reasons, suffer the pure worship of God to be established in Israel, which cost him the ruin of his family. So far did worldly policy prevail against religion, that the golden calves were still suffered to stand.—*Bp. Wilson*.

32. *To cut Israel short.*]—That is, 'to lessen the power of the Israelites.' The Hebrew verb קָצַח, means, 'to cut off,' with reference to length, and therefore 'to shorten,' or 'abridge.'

CHAP. XI. VER. 1. *When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed-royal.*]—The terrible fate of these royal families cannot be read without horror; and is sufficient to make one bless Providence for having been born in better times, and of meaner parentage. The whole offspring of Jeroboam, Baasha, and Ahab, kings of Israel, were cut off for their idolatry; so that there was not one left: and the kings of Judah, having contracted an affinity with the house of Ahab, were so destroyed by three successive

massacres, that there was but one left. For, first Jehoram slew all his brethren; then Jehu slew all his brother's children; and now Athaliah destroyed all that her executioners could meet with. Enraged to see Ahab's family cut off, she determined to do the same by the house of David. And, being of the house of Ahab, she had reason to apprehend that Jehu would no longer suffer her to live. Her only chance for safety, therefore, was to usurp the throne; but this she well knew would be impossible, without destroying all the royal progeny, who were no friends to the worship of Baal, which she was determined to maintain.

2. *Bed-chamber.*]—According to the usage of the east, a bed-chamber does not mean a room to sleep in; but a repository for beds. Chardin says, 'In the east, beds are not raised from the ground with posts, a canopy, and curtains; but people lie on the floor. In the evening they spread out a mattress or two of cotton, very light, of which they have several in great houses, against they should have occasion, and a room on purpose for them.' From hence it appears, that it was 'in a chamber of beds' that Joash was concealed.—*Harmer*, ii. 489.

5. *You shall be keepers of the watch of the king's house.*]—The Septuagint reads, 'shall keep the watch of the king's house at the gate;' meaning the gate of the temple that led to the king's house. The three parties were to keep the three gates; this first party, the gate of the king's house, that nobody should break through.—*Dr. Wall*.

5. *A third part of you that enter in, &c.*]—The Levites had their turns, or courses, in the service of the temple; so that a certain number went out every Sabbath, to make room for another course. Jehoiada, having gained over the centurions and guards, or at least some of them, to his party, and having all the Levites at his command, took occasion, at that time when the courses were to be changed, which was at day-break, to arm both those that were coming out, as well as those who were going in; and thus effected the revolution, which he had so wisely planned.—*Dr. Geddes*.

8. *He that cometh within the ranges.*]—That is, 'within the ranks,' or 'lines;' meaning, most probably, 'the precincts of the temple.'—See note on ver. 15.

10. *To the captains over hundreds did the priest give king David's spears and shields, &c.*]—The officers who were admitted to a knowledge of Jehoiada's designs came into the temple unarmed, for fear of creating suspicion. But as David had erected a kind of sacred armoury in one of the apartments, in

which were deposited military weapons, and other trophies which had been taken from his enemies, and dedicated to the Lord, as monuments of victory, Jehoiada took care, on the present occasion, to have this magazine of warlike stores opened; so that there was no want of any sort of arms.—*Josephus*.

12. *And he brought forth.*]—That is, Jehoiada brought forth,

12. *And gave him the testimony.*]—The words ‘gave him,’ both here and in the parallel place, 2 Chron. xxiii. 11, are supplied by our translators; but since the verb ‘put’ is connected with what we render, ‘the testimony,’ as well as the crown, we may infer, that some other regal ornament is signified by the Hebrew expression. Dr. Geddes’s translation is, ‘put upon him the crown and the regal ornaments.’ Montanus, though he translates the Hebrew by ‘testimonium,’ has ‘ornamentum’ in the margin.

14. *And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner was.*]—It appears, from various testimonies, that a seat erected near a pillar, or column, was particularly honorable, and considered as a place of distinction. Homer furnishes an instance of this kind. Speaking of Ulysses, he says,

The monarch, by a column high enthron’d,
His eye withdrew, and fix’d it on the ground.

Odyss. xxiii. 93. *Pope*.

The same custom is also twice mentioned in the eighth book of the Odyssey.—See also 2 Kings xxiii. 3.

Dr. Geddes’s translation is, ‘She beheld the king placed on the tribunal, according to custom.’ He adds, this was a sort of rostrum, erected by Solomon, five cubits square, and three cubits high; where he, and probably his successors, were seated, when they attended the divine service of the temple.—See 2 Chron. vi. 13.

14. *The princes and the trumpeters.*]—The Septuagint and Vulgate have ‘the singers and the trumpeters;’ which, perhaps, is the true reading.

15. *Without the ranges.*]—The Vulgate reads here, and in the parallel place, 2 Chron. xxiii. 14, ‘Take her out beyond the precincts of the temple.’ These were the walls, erected in parallel lines, and forming extensive ranges of buildings round the holy edifice. It is the same word that is used ver. 8. Dr. Waterland reads, ‘within the ranks.’ The reading of the Vulgate appears to be right, and is confirmed by what follows.

16. *And they laid hands on her.*]—The Chaldee paraphrase, with the Syriac and Arabic versions, read, ‘they made room for

her;' that is, they suffered her to go out of the temple. So Houbigant and Dr. Geddes.

CHAP. XII. VER. 4. *Every one that passeth the account.*—This is obscure; and the English reader will perceive, by the words printed in Italics, what has been added to the Hebrew text. Dr. Geddes's translation of this and the following verse is, 'All the hallowed money, that should come into the house of the Lord; the money which, by ordinance, each man should pay for *the ransom* of his life; and whatsoever money, *besides*, any man may voluntarily bring into the house of the Lord; let the priests collect, each from his own acquaintance; and let them repair, *with it*, the breaches of the house; wheresoever any breach shall be found.' The hallowed money was of two sorts; 1. The redemption money, which consisted of a half-shekel for every male that was twenty years old; and 2. All voluntary gifts, or votive offerings. Some interpreters think, with Bp. Patrick, that three sorts of money are here designated.

18. *And sent it to Hazael king of Syria.*—This appears to have been a bribe sent to Hazael, in order to induce him to withdraw his army. We read of similar attempts in heathen writers, and in the early history of our own country, to purchase peace and security: but, instead of producing the desired effect, such temporary offers have only served to render invaders more hostile and rapacious. It is highly probable, that Jehoash, when he sent his treasures to Hazael, stipulated also to pay him a certain annual tribute in future; which, on his failing, or refusing to pay, the Syrian army again took the field, in the ensuing spring, and, according to the expression of the author of the Chronicles, 'executed judgment against Joash,' 2 Chron. xxiv. 24.

20. *Which goeth down to Silla.*—That is, 'on the declivity of Sela.'

CHAP. XIII. VER. 3. *All their days.*—Rather, 'on every occasion.'

5. *The Lord gave Israel a saviour.*—The Septuagint reads, Ἐδωκε Κύριος σωτηρίαν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ, 'The Lord gave deliverance to Israel.' So also the Arabic version; and, as no particular person is mentioned, this seems right. Compare verse 17.

Houbigant transposes the seventh verse, and places it after the fourth, which renders the connection more natural. Dr. Geddes has done the same in his translation.

10. *In the thirty and seventh year of Joash, &c.*—Jehoash reigned with his father three years; otherwise his reign must have commenced in the thirty-ninth, or fortieth, year of Joash, king of Judah.—Bp. Patrick.

14. *The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!*]—See note on chap. ii. 12.

15. *Take bow and arrows.*]—This was a symbolical action, by which the prophet distinctly represented the victory, which he had promised that the king of Israel should obtain over the Syrians. His shooting the arrow eastward, or to that part of the country, which the Syrians had taken from his ancestors, may be considered as a declaration of war. The direction given him, verse 18, to strike, or smite, with the other arrows on the ground, indicated the number of victories that he was to achieve: but Joash staying his hand too soon displeased the prophet, because it denoted the imperfection of his conquest. See *Stackhouse*.

CHAP. XIV. VER. 8. *Come, let us look one another in the face.*]—That is, let us try our strength against each other. To face an enemy, or to face one another, is still a common expression. The Arabic version has, ‘let us come to the contest.’ See ver. 11.

9. *The thistle that was in Lebanon sent, &c.*]—The custom among the eastern nations of delivering their sentiments in parables is well known. The person to whom this little apologue, or fable, is addressed, was a petty tyrant, who had been flushed with some trifling success, and was therefore impatient to enlarge his kingdom. Considering these circumstances, no similitude could be better adapted to the character of Amaziah than that of a thistle; a low, useless, and neglected weed, but which, having drawn blood from some traveller as he passed by, is represented as growing proud, and affecting an equality with the cedar, the pride and ornament of the forest. In the midst of all this arrogance, it is said, that a wild beast passed by and trod it under foot. This, Joash intimates, would be the fate of Amaziah, if he presumed any longer to provoke a prince of his strength and prowess.

19. *They made a conspiracy against him.*]—The people of Jerusalem were provoked, it is probable, to this conspiracy, in consequence of seeing their city plundered of its richest ornaments, its walls of defence laid in ruins, and many of their children carried away as hostages, (see ver. 14.) to insure the peaceable demeanor and submission of those who were left behind.

21. *The people of Judah took Azariah.*]—In the next chapter, ver. 30, he is called Uzziah; and also 2 Chron. xxvi. 1; but this king of Judah, in the Hebrew text, has at least four or five different names, of which the most proper seems to be Ozihu. Dr. Kennicott is of opinion, that the transcribers confounded

the name of the king, עֲזִיחָו, Ozihu, with the name of his priest עֲזִרְיָהוּ, Ozrihu, who is mentioned 2 Chron. xxvi. in the 17th and 20th verses.

25. *By the hand of his servant Jonah, &c.*]—The only mention we have of Jonah, in the Old Testament, is in this passage, and in the account of his famous mission to Nineveh. The prophecies by which he encouraged Jeroboam to declare war against the king of Syria, are not recorded in Scripture. There had been a constant succession of prophets in Israel from the earliest times; but not one of the prophets had left any of their predictions in writing, till those of the present age; and their writings make a part of the canon of Scripture. Hosea, who continued long a prophet, lived in the reign of this second Jeroboam; therefore the word of the Lord by him is called, ‘the beginning of the word of the Lord,’ Hosea i. 2, because it was then that the prophetic part of the word of the Lord began to be written. At the same time Amos prophesied, and soon after Micah; then Isaiah, in the days of Ahaz and Hezekiah. Thus, God never left himself without witness; but, in the darkest and most degenerate ages, raised up some to be burning and shining lights.

The Jews imagine that Jonah was the son of the widow of Sarepta, whom Elijah raised from the dead. But the only ground for this conceit is, that he is called the son of אֱמֶת, i. e. ‘the son of truth;’ because his mother said to the prophet, when he restored her son, ‘Now I know that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth,’ 1 Kings xvii. 24: but this is fully confuted by the observation, that he is said to be of Gath-hepher, which, as St. Jerome informs us, is a great distance from Sarepta, towards Tiberias, in the tribe of Zebulun.

28. *He recovered Damascus and Hamath (which belonged to Judah) for Israel.*]—The present text reads literally: ‘For Judah in Israel,’ and so the Greek version. I have followed the common translation, except in the arrangement; but I greatly suspect that ‘to Judah’ is an interpolation: and, indeed, it is wanting in the Syriac and Arabic versions. Damascus and Hamath, or Epiphania, had been subdued by David, but they were retaken by the Syrians. See 2 Sam. viii. 6.—*Dr. Geddes.*

CHAP. XV. VER. 1. *In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, began Azariah son of Amaziah, king of Judah, to reign.*]—Either this twenty-seventh should be the seventeenth year, or else Jeroboam must have been associated with his father in the kingdom ten years before Joash died: for it had been said just before, chap. xiv. 17, that Amaziah, the father of Azariah, out-lived Joash, the father of this Jeroboam,

but fifteen years: therefore when Amaziah died, and Azariah succeeded, Jeroboam could have been on the throne but fifteen years; or, as the parts of years might happen, his seventeenth might have commenced. Chronologers endeavour to reconcile these incongruities of numbers, by supposing the son to have been taken into partnership, of which the sacred text, or history, never says any thing. It is more likely that the copyist has written twenty-seven for seventeen. If so, the mistake must have been made very early, for the Septuagint is as the Hebrew. Yet Josephus says, it was but the fifteenth year of Jeroboam, when Azariah began to reign. He says, it was after that Jeroboam had reigned fourteen years.—*Dr. Wall.*

Dr. Lightfoot would reconcile the difficulties respecting this chronology, by supposing that there was an interregnum of eleven, or twelve years, after the death of Amaziah.

5. *In a several house.*—That is, ‘in a separate, or remote house;’ or, perhaps, the meaning only is, that he lived ‘in a separate apartment,’ without quitting his palace.

12. *Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation.*—God had promised Jehu, that for executing his will upon the house of Ahab, he would continue the throne of Israel in his family for four generations. Accordingly, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam, and Zachariah succeed him: but, because he acted not so much in obedience to the divine command, as to satisfy his own ambitious views, and with a degree of cruelty abhorred by the divine nature, God cuts his family short, as soon as he had fulfilled his promise to him, and thus accomplished the prophecy of Hosea; ‘I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel,’ chap. i. 4. Perhaps it was in remembrance of this prophecy, as well as of the promise, which gave the kingdom to Jehu’s posterity during four generations only, that Shallum was encouraged to attempt the life of Zachariah.—See *Bp. Patrick*, and *Poole*.

19. *Pul the king of Assyria, &c.*—This Pul is thought to have been the father of Sardanapalus, who was called ‘Sardan,’ with ‘Pul,’ his father’s name, annexed; as Merodach, king of Babylon, was called Merodach-Baladan, because he was the son of Baladan.—*Prideaux*, and *Wall.*

29. *Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, &c.*—He is supposed by some to have been the son and successor of Sardanapalus, who restored the kingdom of Assyria and governed it, after it had been dismembered by Belesis and Arbaces; but the learned *Prideaux* makes him the same with Arbaces. By *Ælian* he is called ‘Thilgamus,’ and by *Castor*, ‘Ninus Junior,’ who, to-

gether with Belesis, headed the conspiracy against Sardanapalus, and fixed his royal seat at Nineveh, the ancient residence of the Assyrian kings; as Belesis, who in Scripture is likewise called Baladan, Is. xxxix. 1, fixed his residence at Babylon, and there governed his newly erected empire for nineteen years. The first captivity of the Israelites was made by Pul, who carried away the two tribes and a half situated beyond the Jordan: the second was made by Tiglath-pileser. There were, in reality, three deportations, says Mr. Lake, of the Israelites; the first was of Galilee, the second of Samaria, and the third of Judea; whence, under the second temple, Samaria, Galilee, and Judea, were the general names of the three provinces.

CHAP. XVI. VER. 6. *Jews.*]—The Hebrews, at a late period of their history, were called ‘Jews’ from the tribe of Judah. From this tribe their king was chosen, the Messiah was to come, and this tribe returned from the Babylonish captivity in the most flourishing condition; whereas, the ten tribes that were carried away captive, never returned again.—*Bp. Wilson.*

9. *Kir.*]—The Vulgate, and some copies of the Septuagint, have ‘Cyrene.’ Josephus informs us, that this was a city of the upper Media. No one can believe, says Le Clerc, that this Assyrian king extended the limits of his empire as far as Cyrene in Africa, which was not yet built; particularly as it appears, that he had not even conquered Egypt.—See *Bochart*, *Phaleg*. lib. iv. c. 32. p. 293.

15. *The brasen altar shall be for me to enquire by.*]—He pretended to have some regard for this altar, and therefore ordered it to be set apart for his own use. Pilkington thinks that the text should be rendered, ‘The brasen altar shall be for me to worship at.’ So also the Syriac and Arabic versions. Dr. Geddes appears to have followed the Vulgate, and translates, ‘Let the brasen altar remain at my disposal.’

18. *The covert for the sabbath.*]—It is extremely difficult to ascertain what is meant by these words. It is probable, however, that it meant an elevated seat, which was inclosed, with a canopy placed over it. See *Parkhurst’s* Heb. Lexic. on the word *סֹד*. Locke supposes that it was a shelter erected for the people, when the crowd was too great for the porch to contain them; but the context seems to require that it should be something of more importance. Instead of ‘covert,’ the Septuagint reads *Θεμελιον της καθεδρας*, the ‘base, or foundation, of the chair.’ The Syriac and Arabic versions have ‘the house of the sabbath.’ Dr. Geddes thinks that it was a seat placed on some elevation, perhaps, for the king and his court, when they attended the public worship on a sabbath-day, 2 Chron. vi. 13.

This, in all probability, was formed of valuable materials, or richly ornamented; and increased the treasure, which Ahaz 'turned from the house of the Lord for the king of Assyria.'

CHAP. XVII. VER. 1. *Nine years.*]—'And he reigned' must be understood before these words.

3. *Shalmaneser king of Assyria.*]—This monarch is called, Tobit i. 2, 'Enemessar,' and in Hosea x. 14, 'Shalman.' He was the son and successor of Arbaces, or Tiglath-pileser. Josephus informs us, that he was mentioned in the annals of the Tyrians.

4. *So, king of Egypt.*]—This is supposed to be the same person, who, in the catalogue of the kings of Egypt, is called 'Sabachon.' He is mentioned by Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus.

6. *Carried Israel away into Assyria.*]—The policy of transplanting a conquered people into another country, is to prevent their combining together, (which they cannot so well do in a strange land, and among a mixed multitude of different languages) in order to shake off their yoke, and recover their liberty. Among other rich things, which Shalmaneser took and carried away in this expedition, was the golden calf, which Jeroboam had set up at Bethel, and which ever since his time had been worshipped by the ten tribes, who revolted with him from the house of David. The other golden calf, which he set up at the same time at Dan, had been taken away about ten years before by Tiglath-pileser, when he invaded Galilee, the province in which that city stood.—See *Prideaux*, A. 729, and *Dr. Dodd*.

9. *The tower of the watchmen.*]—These 'towers,' which we read of so frequently in our translation, were, for the most part, cottages built on eminences, where the shepherds watched their flocks, and where men were occasionally stationed for the purpose of military observation.

10. *Groves.*]—Rather, idols that were erected in groves, for the purposes of idolatrous worship. See ver. 6, and note on chap. xxiii. 6.

14. *Hardened their necks.*]—A metaphor taken from stubborn oxen, says Poole, that make their necks hard and stiff, and will not bow to the yoke.

18. *Removed them out of his sight.*]—A strong expression signifying God's rejection of this apostate people, and his removing of them from his care and providence. Houbigant recommends a transposition of the next verse, which he reads after verse 23.

25. *They feared not the Lord: therefore the Lord sent lions*

among them, &c.]—Instead of ‘lions,’ Josephus says they were infected with a dreadful plague; so that the country was in a manner depopulated: but, allowing it to be ‘lions,’ it may be asked why these new inhabitants should be more afflicted than the Israelites, who feared the Lord as little as they. It was, perhaps, because the Israelites, though addicted to idolatry, did not deny the divine power and providence of God. They only imagined that their idols were the intermediate causes, by which the blessings of Jehovah might be conveyed to them: whereas these new-comers believed the idols, which they worshipped, to be the true gods, and had no conceptions of an Almighty Being, who made and governs the world. See *Calmet*.

30. *The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth.*]—Or ‘Succot Benoth,’ which, Lamy says, signifies ‘tents for young women;’ i. e. they built a temple, and surrounded it with tents, in which the young women prostituted themselves in honor of Venus, p. 390. Thus, according to Herodotus, Venus was honored at Babylon. See, particularly, on this subject, the disquisition of the learned *Selden*, *De Diis Syris*, Syntagm. 11. cap. 7, cum Addit. *Beyeri*.

30. *The men of Cuth made Nergal.*]—Cuth was a province of Assyria, which, according to some, lies on the Araxis; but others rather think it to be the same with Cush, which is said by Moses to be encompassed with the river Gihon, and must, therefore, be the same with the country, which the Greeks call Susiana, and which to this day is called by the inhabitants Chusesta. Their idol ‘Nergal’ seems to have been the sun, as the cause of the diurnal and annual revolutions of the planets; for it is naturally derived from נר, ‘ner,’ light, and גל, ‘gel,’ to revolve.

The Rabbis say, that the idol was represented in the shape of a cock, and probably they tell us the truth; for this seems a very proper emblem. Among the later heathens, we find the cock was sacred to Apollo, or the sun. (See *Pierii Hieroglyph.* p. 223.) ‘Because,’ says Heliodorus, speaking of the time when cocks crow, ‘by a natural sensation of the sun’s revolution to us, they are incited to salute the god.’ *Æthiop.* lib. i. And, perhaps, under this name, ‘Nergal,’ they meant to worship the sun, not only for the diurnal return of its light upon the earth, but also for its annual return, or revolution. We may observe that the emblem, a cock, is affected by the latter as well as by the former, and is frequently crowing both day and night, when the days begin to lengthen.—See *Calmet*, and *Selden*, Syntag. ii. cap. 8.

30. *The men of Hamath made Ashima.*]—There are several cities and countries which go under the name of Hamath; but

what we take to be here meant is, that province of Syria which lies on the Orontes, in which there was a city of the same name, which when Shalmaneser had taken, he removed the inhabitants from thence into Samaria. Their idol Ashima signifies 'atoner,' or 'expiator,' from אָשָׁם, 'asham.' The word is in the Chaldee form, and seems to be the same as אֲשַׁמַּת שְׁמֶרֶן, 'the sin of Samaria,' mentioned Amos viii. 14, where אֲשַׁמַּת is rendered by the Septuagint 'propitiation.' It is known to every one, who has the least acquaintance with the mythology of the heathens, how strongly and universally they retained the tradition of an atonement, or expiation for sin, although they expected it from a false object, and insufficient means. We find it expressed in very clear terms among the Romans, even so late as the time of Horace, lib. i. ode 2.

Cui dabit partes scelus expiandi,
Jupiter——?

And whom, to expiate the horrid guilt,
Will Jove appoint?

The answer is, 'Apollo,' the god of light. Some think that as Asuman, or Suman, in the Persian language, signifies 'heaven,' the Syrians might from hence derive the name of this god, who, they suppose, was represented by a large stone pillar, terminating in a conic, or pyramidical figure, by which they denoted fire. See *Parkhurst* on the word אָשָׁם, 'ashem,' *Calmet's Dictionary*, and *Tennison* on idolatry.

31. *Nibhaz and Tartak.*—Some think that one of these names signifies the sun, and that the other means a chariot. Hence these two idols may, together, denote the sun mounted on his car, as the poets often represented that luminary.

31. *Burned their children in fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech.*—Moloch, Milcom, and Melech, in the language of different nations, all signify 'a king,' and imply 'the sun,' which was called the 'king of heaven.' The addition of Adra, which signifies 'powerful,' to the one, and of Anam, which implies 'to answer,' to the other, means no more than 'the mighty,' or the 'oracular Moloch.' The circumstance of children being offered to him sufficiently shews, that he was the same with the Moloch of the Ammonites, or the Saturn of the Phœnicians.—*Calmet*, and *Bp. Patrick*.

41. *So these nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images.*—That is, they joined the worship of their own idols with that of God; in the same manner as the Israelites before

them had blended the worship of the golden calves with that of the Holy One of Israel.—*Calmet*, and *Bp. Patrick*.

CHAP. XVIII. VER. 2. *Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign.*—It is said, chap. xvi. 2, that he was but twenty years old when he began to reign, and that he reigned sixteen years before he died; so that he lived thirty-six years. It is also said, that his son Hezekiah began to reign at the age of five and twenty; consequently his father must have begotten him when he was but eleven years old. In the parallel text, 2 Chron. xxviii. 1, it is observed, that Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and that he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; but the Syriac, Arabic, and Septuagint versions, have 'twenty-five years.' This is an additional instance to the great number already noticed, shewing the difference that exists in the Hebrew text, and in the ancient versions, with respect to numbers. They are, indeed, so far from agreeing, that it is rather uncommon to find an instance in which they do not differ. The causes of this variation, or discrepancy, have been already stated (see note on Numb. i. 46), and all attempts to reconcile them, at this distance of time, must be ineffectual.

4. *And brake in pieces the brasen serpent, &c.*—The brasen serpent had been carefully preserved by the Israelites, as a memorial of God's goodness to their fathers in the wilderness, and as a traditional evidence of the truth of the facts which are recorded, Num. xxi. 9; but in process of time, they who would not worship images borrowed from the heathens, were induced to burn incense to this serpent, because it was made by the order of God himself, and had been formerly the instrument of good to their ancestors.

But we must not suppose that the Israelites had considered this brasen serpent as an object of religious worship from the time of the death of Moses; for neither David, nor Solomon, at the beginning of his reign, would have suffered such an idolatrous practice, nor can we think that either Asa, or Jehoshaphat, when they rooted out idolatry, would have spared this image, had the people, in their time, either worshipped it, or burnt incense to it. The commencement of this superstition, therefore, must have been of later date, and subsequent to the time when all kinds of idolatry were introduced by the successors of David, from his contracting an alliance with Ahab's family. Notwithstanding we are expressly assured in the present text, that Hezekiah broke this serpent in pieces; yet the Roman Catholics pretended to shew it entire in the church of St. Ambrose at Milan.

4. *Called it Nehushtan.*]—Parkhurst observes, that the name Nehushtan, נְחֻשְׁתָּן, seems a compound of נֶחֶשׁ, 'nechesh,' to divine, and תָּן, 'tan,' a serpent, and so denotes the divining spirit. He thinks therefore the passage should be rendered, 'Hezekiah brake the serpent of brass, which Moses made, because even to those days the children of Israel were burning incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.' So the Targum renders the latter part of the verse, 'and they called it Nehushtan.'

14. *Three hundred talents of silver, and thirty talents of gold.*]—Equal to about three hundred and fifty-one thousand pounds of our money.—*Prideaux.*

17. *Tartan, and Rabsaris, and Rab-shakeh, &c.*]—These are not the proper names of the men, but denote their respective employment and offices. 'Tartan' signifies 'the president of the counsel.' 'Rabsaris,' 'the chief eunuch,' and 'Rab-shakeh,' 'the principal cup-bearer.'—*Le Clerc.*

19, 20. *And Rab-shakeh said unto them, &c.*]—The Jews are of opinion, that Rab-shakeh, from his speaking Hebrew so fluently, was either an apostate Jew, or one of the captivity of Israel. It is certain, that he was a very eloquent man, and his speech seemed well adapted to raise sedition among the besieged.

21. *Now, behold, thou trustest upon the staff of this bruised reed, even upon Egypt, &c.*]—This comparison is excellently adapted to denote an ally, that is not only weak and unable to help, but also dangerous to those who rely on him for succor: and Rab-shakeh's representing the power of Egypt to be as brittle as the reeds growing on the banks of the Nile, (for to these doubtless he alludes) is a great beauty in the similitude.

CHAP. XIX. VER. 3. *The children are come to the birth, &c.*]—A strong, proverbial form of expression, signifying great difficulty and danger, without having the power of extricating oneself from it. There is a simile in Homer not unlike this.—See II. xi. 269.

8. *Found the king of Assyria warring against Libnah.*]—Libnah was not far from Lachish, and both were situated on the mountains of Judah. It is probable that Sennacherib, unable to take the latter place, had removed the siege to Libnah, which he considered as a place not so well fortified as Lachish; and so situated, that by keeping a strong guard at the passes of the mountains, he should be able to carry on the siege, notwithstanding the approach of Tirhakah.—See *Le Clerc.*

21. *The virgin, the daughter of Zion, &c.*]—By 'the daughter of Zion,' it is probable the inspired author means the people

who inhabited the upper part of the city; and, by 'the daughter of Jerusalem,' those of the lower part. Zion is called 'a virgin;' because it had never been violated by the enemy. It is not uncommon for a fortress which has never been taken, to be called 'a virgin-fortress.'

23. *The forest of his Carmel.*]—That is, 'the forest of mount Carmel,' which seems to have been another inaccessible place, like Lebanon. Or, the translation may be 'into his forest, and his fruitful field.' For Carmel, though it was properly a pleasant and fruitful mountain in the tribe of Issachar, of which see Josh. xii. 22, yet it is often used to signify any fruitful place, as is manifest from the Hebrew of Isa. x. 18; xvi. 10; and Jer. ii. 7. Thus, all the parts of land are here enumerated; the mountains, the cities, the woods, and the fruitful fields. Or, 'his fruitful forest,' may mean Jerusalem: which is thought by many interpreters, to be called a forest, Jer. xxi. 14; Ezek. xx. 46; a name agreeing well enough with cities, where buildings are very numerous, close, and high, like trees in a forest. Farther, if Jerusalem might be called 'a forest,' it may well be called Hezekiah's Carmel, or fruitful place, because his chief strength, treasure, and fruit, were now in it: and this last word seems to be added here, to intimate, that this was not like other forests, unfruitful and barren. So both this and the foregoing words are understood of Jerusalem; the last branch being joined to the former by way of apposition; 'into the lodging of his border, the forest of his Carmel;' or 'his fruitful forest,' there being no more words in the Hebrew text.—*Poole.*

24. *I have digged, and drunk strange waters.*]—He boasts, says Bp. Patrick, that he had marched through strange countries, and in the driest places, where it was thought his army would die with thirst; but he digged till he found water.

24. *With the sole of my feet have I dried up all the rivers of besieged places.*]—This is commonly thought to signify, that he had gone dry-shod with his whole army over great rivers, whose streams he had turned another way; and had thus taken the strongest fortresses surrounded with water and high ramparts. But Bochart, Hieroz. part ii. lib. v. c. 15, observes, that the Hebrew word מצור, which we every where translate 'besieged places, defences, or fortresses,' should be here taken as the proper name of Egypt. Thus Isa. xix. 6, where we read, 'the brooks of defence shall be dried up,' Kimchi interprets the passage by, 'the rivers of Egypt shall be emptied and dried up.' The same word is used Micah vii. 12, where our translation is, 'from the fortress even to the river,' which is scarcely intelligible; but if we read, 'from Egypt to the Euphrates,'

the sense will be clear, because that was the utmost extent of the land of Canaan. The following observations are taken from Harmer, vol. iii. p. 410, 412.

Though Hezekiah stopped up the wells of water, Sennacherib boasted that he was not afraid of wanting water, or of being reduced to get it with hazard, or difficulty, from small fountains at a distance; which boast was, perhaps, occasioned by an account which he had heard of the precautions taken by Hezekiah. He seems to say, that he could as easily turn the water of great rivers, and cause their old channels to become dry, as a gardener stops the water from flowing any longer in a rill by the sole of his foot. As the gardener stops up one rill and opens another with his mattock, to let in the water; so, says Sennacherib, I have digged, and drunk strange waters; that is, waters which did not flow in the places where I have made them flow. This is the easiest interpretation that can, I believe, be given to the word 'strange,' made use of by this Assyrian prince, and makes the whole verse a reference to the eastern way of watering. 'I have digged channels, and drunk, and caused my army to drink, out of new-made rivers, into which I have conducted the waters that used to flow elsewhere; and have laid those old channels dry with the sole of my foot; i. e. with as much ease as a gardener digs channels in his garden; and, directing the waters of a cistern into a new rill, stops up with his foot that in which it ran before.'

In confirmation of this, let it be remembered, that this mode of watering by rills is in use in those countries from whence Sennacherib came; and it continued down from ancient times there, without doubt, as it is now practised in Egypt.

28. *I will put my hook in thy nose.*—This alludes to the method by which the common people manage their beasts in the East, especially the dromedaries, which are governed by a bridle that is fastened to a ring, which runs through the nostrils of the beast.—*Dr. Shaw's Travels.* See *Bp. Patrick*.

29. *Ye shall eat this year such things as grow of themselves, &c.*—Sennacherib having with his army trodden down the corn, and destroyed the fruits of the earth, the people might justly dread the miseries of famine, particularly as the ensuing year was the sabbatical year, in which they were not permitted to plough, sow, or reap. See *Levit. xxv. 4.* But the prophet assures them, that, for the remainder of the first year, they should eat of what grew spontaneously; for that is the meaning of the Hebrew שָׂדֵה, as Grotius observes. During the second year, he assures them, that they should have sufficient food from the corn that was scattered on the ground; and, on

the third, they were to cultivate their lands as usual. This verse, and the five following, are addressed to the good king Hezekiah and his people.

35. *The angel of the Lord went out, and smote.*]—Mr. Boswell, in his *Life of Dr. Johnson*, informs us, that it was a subject of conversation between them, in what manner so great a multitude of Sennacherib's army was destroyed. 'We are not to suppose,' says the Doctor, in reply, 'that the angel went about with a sword in his hand, stabbing them one by one; but that some powerful natural agent was employed for the purpose, most probably the samiel, or simoom.'

Mr. Bruce's account of this wonderful natural phenomenon may serve to illustrate this interpretation of the text.

On the 16th, at half past ten, we left El Mout, (Death). At eleven o'clock, while we contemplated with great pleasure the rugged top of Chiggre, to which we were fast approaching, and where we were to solace ourselves with plenty of good water, Idris cried out, 'Fall upon your faces, for here is the simoom.' I saw from the S. E. a haze come, in color like the purple part of the rainbow, but not so compressed, or thick. It did not occupy twenty yards in breadth, and was about twelve feet high from the ground. It was a kind of blush upon the air, and it moved very rapidly, for I scarcely could turn to fall upon the ground, with my head to the northward, when I felt the heat of its current plainly upon my face. We all lay flat upon the ground, as if dead, till Idris told us it was blown over. The meteor, or purple haze, which I saw, was indeed passed; but the light air that still blew was of sufficient heat to threaten suffocation. For my part, I found distinctly in my breast that I had imbibed a part of it; nor was I free of an asthmatic sensation, till I had been some months in Italy, at the baths of Poretta, near two years afterwards.—See, also, *Prideaux*, vol. i. p. 20. folio edition.

A similar account, with respect to the principal facts, is given by Ives in his *Travels*. 'The samiel,' he observes (p. 76.) 'is a noxious blast, to which travellers are sometimes exposed in passing the desert of Arabia, in the months of July and August. In some years it does not blow at all; but in others it comes six or eight times. It seldom continues more than a few minutes at a time; and passes with the quickness of lightning where it produces its effects. It flies in streams of no great breadth; so that some persons, at a small distance from each other, may escape; and others, at a few miles distance, may be exposed to different samiels. The blast occasions instantaneous death to every man, or beast, that happens to be with the face to-

wards it; and after death, the limbs, on being pulled, will separate from the body; so absolute is the dissolution. Those who are used to the country perceive, providentially, a short warning, by a thick haze in the horizon, and by a sensible alteration of the air; on which occasion, the only means of escape is, for travellers to lie prostrate with their faces close to the ground, their feet towards the samiel, and to continue so till it is passed. It is known in all the desert of Arabia, and particularly between Baghdad and Aleppo.' See, also, *Niebuhr*, *Description de l'Arabie*, p. 7, 8; *Maillet*, Letter xiv; and *Sir J. Chardin*, tom. ii. p. 9.

Josephus quotes Herodotus, as relating this fact in a disfigured manner, on the authority of the Egyptian priests; but Berosus has recorded it as it is here, excepting that, instead of an 'angel,' he says, it was a 'pestilence' which destroyed the Assyrians.

35. *An hundred fourscore and five thousand.*]—See note on Numb. i. 46.

37. *Nisroch his god.*]—The learned Jurieu has made it appear, that this idol was Jupiter Belus, the founder of the Babylonish empire, who was worshipped under the form of an eagle; and he farther observes, that as this Belus, in profane history, was the same with the Nimrod of Moses, it is not improbable, that, to perpetuate his honor, his votaries changed the name of Nimrod, which signifies 'a rebel,' into that of Nisroch, which denotes 'a young eagle.' See, also, *Additamenta Beyeri*, ad *Seldeni De Diis Syris*, Syntagm. ii. c. 10.

CHAP. XX. VER. 7. *Take a lump of figs.*]—A roasted fig, with some white sugar reduced to powder, is still used at Constantinople as a sort of suppurative application for those inflammatory tumors, which they call 'plague-boils.'—See *Phil. Transact.* vol. xlvii. p. 387.

The sanative virtues of the fig are also mentioned by the ancients in similar cases.—See *Plin.* lib. xxii. c. 25; and *Celsus*, lib. v. c. 27.

9, 10. There are several modes of constructing dials, says Scheuzer, so that the shadow cast by the gnomon shall go backward at certain times of the day. For instance, in the torrid zone, when the sun is in the arc of the ecliptic, comprised between the nearest tropic and the parallel of the place, the shadow will trace back some part of what it had advanced, once in the morning, and once in the afternoon.—Vide *Costard's Astronomy*, p. 105.

A singular phenomenon was remarked by a person named Romuald, prior of a convent at Metz. The prior, with two of

his monks, Lucian and Alexis, remarked, on June 7, 1703, that in a sun-dial facing the east, the shadow at noon exactly retrograded from the meridian line, to that line which marked ten hours and a half, and that afterwards, by little and little, it returned to the line of noon. This fact is reported by Parent, in his *Recherches Math. et Physiq.* p. 256, and by Thummig, de *Phænomeno singulari solis cœlo sereno pallescentis*, p. 19, who attributes the phenomenon to a refraction of the solar rays, augmented insensibly by a condensation of the atmosphere, whose interstices were filled by heterogeneous and thickening particles. Perhaps a layer of incrassated or condensed air, occupying the atmosphere in the direction of the sun's rays, (which at noon, is from the equator directly north, the usual course of the heated air flowing from the equator,) might produce this effect.

Whoever is used to astronomical observations, knows, that what Hooke calls 'veins of air;' i. e. layers of air of different densities, and of dissimilar compositions, often interpose between the observer and his object. As the air, at different elevations, is of different degrees of heat, and pursues different courses, it is very credible, that a quantity of air loaded with transparent vapors, brought from a distance, either by its own properties, or by affecting the air below it, should vary the refractive powers of the atmosphere: now, the sun's rays passing through this varied portion, would take a new direction, and move the dial-shadow accordingly. This refraction occurs every morning and evening in the instance of the twilight, and may occur at noon-day; for as the lighter evaporations from the earth rise to great heights in the atmosphere, and the current of air heated under the line by the sun's direct beams, also rises to a great height, and the various gases which are brought from different parts of the globe, are of different densities, and rise to great heights; an assemblage of these vapors above the lower strata of the atmosphere, (of different densities at different times) when lying in the course of the solar rays, may refract them in various ways, of which we have little conception: nor indeed could we suspect such causes, before the nature of gaseous airs was understood as it now is.

Some commentators have justly remarked, that this accounts for one miracle by inventing more. For further information on this subject, see the next note, and that on Isa. xxxviii. 8.

11. *He brought the shadow ten degrees backward, &c.*—The generality of interpreters have supposed that the sun actually went backward; but had that been the case, it must have been perceived all over the world, which certainly it was not. The prophet here does not mean that the sun went backward, but

only the rays of the sun. The words may be thus naturally rendered, 'the beams of the sun' (being miraculously inflected) 'caused the shadow to go back over ten of the degrees,' or steps 'which it had passed upon the dial of Ahaz,' or flight of steps. For, to suppose that the whole fabric of the universe went back, or that even the earth alone did so, is unnecessary, because the business was not to lengthen the day, but only to put the shadow back so many degrees. Besides, the original word מעלות, does not signify a dial; but degrees, steps, or stairs, and so the Septuagint renders it. So, also, Josephus, with the Syriac and Arabic versions. The gnomon-dial is not supposed to have been invented till about 200 years after Hezekiah.—See Univ. Hist. vol. iv. p. 165.

What the degrees mentioned in this text were, says Dr. Geddes, or how the dials of those days were divided, is altogether uncertain. The degrees may have been lines denoting minutes only.

This dial, says Grotius, (on the authority of Eliohu Chomur) consisted of a semicircle, in which there was a small globe. This cast a shadow coinciding with lines cut, or graduated, on the inside of the semicircle, to the number, as it is said, of twenty-eight. The strokes are called in Hebrew, as they are at present on mathematical instruments, 'degrees.' A small motion of the whole apparatus, which might have been communicated by supernatural power, would have produced the retrocession of the shadow as here described. It should be remarked, that the text does not state that the sun went backward, or the shadow of objects in general; but the shadow of Ahaz's dial only.

13. *Shewed them all the house of his precious things.*—The display which Hezekiah made of his treasure was to gratify the ambassadors of the king of Babylon. It appears to have been an extraordinary thing, and not done but upon this and occasions of a similar nature. Such, probably, was the general practice. Lord Macartney informs us, that 'the splendor of the emperor of China and his court, and the riches of the mandarins, surpass all that can be said of them. Their silks, porcelain, cabinets, and other furniture, make a most glittering appearance. These, however, are only exposed when they make, or receive visits: for they commonly neglect themselves at home, the laws against private pomp and luxury being very severe.'

Whatever might have been the practice of eastern nations, on such occasions, it appears to have been extremely imprudent on the part of Hezekiah, and may remind the classical scholar of a passage in Lucan:

———— Proh cæcus et amens
Ambitione furor! ———
Divitias aperire suas, incendere mentem
Hospitis armati.—LIB. X. VER. 146—149.

Fantastic madness of unthinking pride,
To boast that wealth, which prudence strives to hide;
In civil wars such treasures to display,
And tempt a soldier with the hopes of prey!—Rowe.

18. *Eunuchs.*]—That is, servants, or officers of the lowest description: for the Hebrew word does not import a ‘eunuch,’ properly so called; and the Arabic version has, ‘they shall be servants in the palace,’ &c.

19. *Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken, &c.*] The words in the original are to this effect: ‘What thou hast told me from God is good;’ I willingly submit to it. ‘But shall peace and truth continue for my time?’ God is just in all his ways. ‘But do these threats relate to me, or to my posterity only?’ Happy for me, if he will suspend the execution of his wrath during the small portion of time I have to live!—*Calmet.*

CHAP. XXI. VER. 13. *I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria.*]—This metaphor is taken from the custom of using a line in laying out the lots and portions which belong to several persons. It signifies that Jerusalem should suffer the same fate as Samaria had done; that is, be visited by famine, demolished by the enemy, and its inhabitants carried away captive.

16. *Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood.*]—Among the numerous victims that were doomed to death by the cruelty of this foolish and idolatrous king, was the venerable prophet Isaiah, whom he caused to be sawn asunder, it is recorded, with a wooden saw, in order to prolong his torments, and to render them more exquisite. See chap. xxiv. 4.

CHAP. XXII. VER. 8. *I have found the book of the law.*]—Commentators are not agreed, whether this book contained the whole Pentateuch, the Deuteronomy, or only the twenty-eighth and three following chapters of that book. The prevailing opinion seems to be, that it was a genuine copy of the law, if not the real autograph of Moses; which, however, it probably was, from what is said, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14. How long these divine institutes had been neglected and concealed, it is in vain to conjecture; but they had been so totally disregarded during the wicked and idolatrous reigns of Manasseh and Amon, that it was considered as a great and extraordinary event for a book of the law to have been found in the temple. Those impious kings either burnt the sacred writings, or sup-

pressed them, so that Josiah had as yet no book of the law; for when Shaphan read it, he listened to it as to something new, and when the king had heard its contents 'he rent his clothes,' ver. 11. It is probable, however, that this act of grief and terror was caused by hearing the awful denunciations read, which are contained in Deuteronomy xxviii, from verse 15, to the end of the chapter.—See *Le Clerc*, *Poole's Synopsis*, and *Dr. Kennicott*.

In St. Jerome, this 'book' is called 'the book of Deuteronomy.'—Adv. Jovin. lib. i.

By 'the book of the law,' Bp. Wilson understands the identical book, left by Moses, in his own hand-writing. (See 1 Kings ii. 3. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14.) 'It is not to be imagined,' he observes, 'that the king had not, before this, seen the books of Moses; for then how could he have done what he had done before, pursuant to the law of Moses; but, upon finding the very book, (which had been hidden by the care of some of the priests of the true God, to preserve it from the malice and rage of the idolatrous kings) the very hand-writing of Moses being found, the king was moved with a sight of it to a greater zeal in the reformation which he had now begun.'

14. *Huldah the prophetess.*]—There is no mention of this prophetess in any other part of the Holy Scriptures. But from the circumstance of the king's consulting her on this occasion, when both Jeremiah and Zephaniah were prophets in Judah, we may conclude, that she was a person of distinguished piety and of great celebrity.

19. *Thine heart was tender.*]—Rather, 'Thy heart was terrified.' So Houbigant, agreeably to the Vulgate, and nearly all the ancient versions.

CHAP. XXIII. 4. *And carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el.*]—This was done in order to make the altar there a still greater object of abomination.

5. *Unto Baal, to the sun.*]—It should be 'Unto Baal, the sun;' for the words in Hebrew, as Widner observes, have no copulative, or *vau*, between them; whereas it is prefixed to all the rest in this verse. The sun, therefore, is put in apposition, as the grammarians call it, with Baal, and this may be considered as an additional proof, that this idol and the sun are synonymous.

6. *And he brought out the grove from the house of the Lord.*]—This is a very striking confirmation of Selden's opinion, who thinks that the Hebrew word *אֲשֵׁרָה*, and the Greek *το αλσος*, do not mean a grove of trees, but a certain image so called.—De Diis Syris, Synt. ii. c. 2.

Le Clerc supposes, that it was a statue of Astarte. It is called, chap. xxi. 7, 'a graven image,' and we find, ver. 7, that whatever was its form and character, the women wove hangings for it; which were, probably, ornamental curtains for the purpose of concealing the enormities that were practised behind them. This may serve to explain many other passages of Scripture, where the same word occurs, and where our translators render it indiscriminately, 'a grove.'

8. *The high-places of the gates.*]—Houbigant and Dr. Geddes render this 'the hill-chapels of the satyrs.' The Syriac and Arabic versions represent them as altars erected near the gates.

10. *And he defiled Topheth.*]—The meaning of this word, says Dr. Geddes, is extremely uncertain. It was a place dedicated to the worship of Moloch; and some have thought it was a furnace, or fire-stove, in which men, or children, were immolated to that idol. Piscator, Munster, and others are of opinion, that it was derived from תוף, 'a drum;' because drums, or tabors, were beaten during the horrid sacrifices to this 'grim idol,' that the parents might not hear the shrieks of their children, who were, on those occasions, burnt alive. See note on Is. v. 12.

May it not come from a word signifying 'to smoke and smoulder,' like *ρυφω* in Greek?

11. *He took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun, &c.*]—All the people of the east worshipped the sun, and consecrated horses to it, from their fleetness, strength, and agility. The ancients had an idea, that the sun itself was carried through the heavens, in his daily course, from east to west, in a chariot; and therefore chariots, as well as horses, were dedicated to it; for in them the king and his great officers went out every morning, at the east gate of the city, to salute and adore the sun, on his first appearance above the horizon.—See *Bochart*, and *Hyde*, *Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers.*

13. *Mount of corruption.*]—Houbigant reads, 'The mount of Olives,' deriving the Hebrew word, מִשְׁחֵית, from מִשָּׁח, 'to anoint.' See the Marginal Reading. The Chaldee paraphrase favors this interpretation; but the ancient versions are against it. Le Clerc and Dr. Geddes agree with Houbigant.

16. *According to the word of the Lord, &c.*]—These transactions were foretold by the man of God, who came from Judah, three hundred and sixty years before they happened. See 1 Kings xiii. 2. In the Septuagint, there are several words in this place, which are not in the Hebrew, yet they seem genuine, and probably were in the copy from which the Septuagint version was made; which is, 'According to the word of the Lord,

which the man of God proclaimed, when Jeroboam stood, on the feast, by the altar. And he turned, and lifted up his eyes to the sepulchre to the man of God, who proclaimed these words.'

19. *All the houses, also of the high-places.*—Perhaps we should read, with Dr. Waterland and others, 'All the hill-chapels, that were in the other cities of Samaria, which the kings,' &c.

22. *Surely there was not holden such, &c.*—The Septuagint has neither the word 'such,' nor 'wherein;' but it runs thus: 'For this passover was not kept from the days of the judges that judged Israel, and all the days of the kings of Israel, and kings of Judah: but in the eighteenth year of king Josiah the passover was kept, (or, there was a passover kept) to the Lord in Jerusalem.' From these words it appears, as if the keeping of the passover had been omitted during all the time of the judges, and of the kings. There is no mention of a passover in this, or in any of the preceding books, since the celebration of that by Joshua on his entrance into Canaan. But in 2 Chron. xxx, we find there was one kept by Hezekiah, of which nothing is said in the book of Kings; and in 2 Chron. xxxv. 18, where this passover of Josiah is mentioned, it is said, 'There had been no passover like it from the days of Samuel, neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Josiah kept.'—*Dr. Wall.*

24. *The images, and the idols, &c.*—The teraphim at first were only 'penates,' or the images of the ancestors of families; but afterwards they were made use of as magical instruments of divination, and such were opposed to the ephod. Hosea iii. 4.—*Jurieu.*

For further information on this subject, the reader may consult the learned *Selden*, *De Diis Syris*, Syntagm. 1. cap. 2.

26. *His anger was kindled against Judah.*—In justifying God's conduct in punishing Judah for Manasseh's sins, and sins committed in his time, now in the days of Josiah and his sons, we are to consider, that the covenant between God and the Jewish nation was not made with every particular man, but rather with their whole successions. In their several generations, they stood all jointly bound to obey the Lord their God, so that posterity must atone for their fathers' sins by a wary and diligent observance of those commands, which the others had broken. If the fathers had sinned by idolatry, the posterity must redeem their sins, or break them off, by restoring the true worship of God. If the fathers had caused God's wrath upon the land by oppressions, extortions, and cruelties,

the children must divert it by mercy, bounty, and kindness. As the fathers' offences had been greater either in multitude, magnitude, or continuance, so must the virtues and piety of their posterity abound. For although it be most true, that 'the children's teeth are not set on edge for their fathers' eating sour grapes,' but 'the soul that sinneth it shall die;' yet the son may be punished for those sins, which his father only did actually commit, if he seek not to rectify his errors by inclining to the contrary duties.—*Dr. Jackson.*

See note on Exod. xx. 5; and compare Ezek. xviii. 14—21.

29. *Pharaoh-nechoh.*]—The addition of 'Nechoh' to Pharaoh, the usual title of the Egyptian kings, was given to this monarch, as some imagine, on account of his being lame: but it is much more probable, that the proper names of kings were now added to that of the title, for the purpose of distinction. This appears evident, in the present case, from Herodotus, lib. ii. c. 158. *Ψαμμιτιχὸς δὲ Νεκῶς παῖς ἐγένετο, καὶ ἐβασίλευσε Αἰγύπτῳ.* 'Nechos was the son of Psammitichus, and he reigned over Egypt.'

29. *And he slew him.*]—That is, Pharaoh-nechoh slew Josiah.

31. *Jehoahaz was twenty and three years old when he began to reign, &c.*]—He could not have been the elder son of Josiah, but the second, whom the people in some faction set up, because his brother, Jehoiakim, was twenty-five at the end of those three months: yet Josiah, if then living, would have been under forty, if there were no interregnum.—*Dr. Wall.*

CHAP. XXIV. VER. 1. *Became his servant.*]—Rather, 'became his subject.'

8. *Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he began to reign.*]—In 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9, it is said, that 'He was only eight years old when he began to reign;' another mistake with respect to numbers. Some commentators attempt to reconcile the difference, by supposing that he was only eight years old when associated with his father in the regal office, and eighteen when he began to reign alone; but it is extremely probable, that the Hebrew copyist misinterpreted the numerals, and wrote 'eight,' instead of 'eighteen.' See note on Numb. i. 46.

12. *In the eighth year of his reign.*]—Meaning, the king of Babylon's reign.

17. *Mattaniah, his father's brother.*]—That is, Jehoiachin's uncle, or Jehoiakim's brother.

17. *Changed his name to Zedekiah.*]—Travellers inform us, that it is still customary in the East for men to change their names, in consequence of some remarkable occurrence, or important event happening to them.

CHAP. XXV. VER. 7. *And put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and carried him to Babylon.*—Thus, the two famous prophecies of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, which seemed to contradict each other, were both fulfilled. ‘I will bring him to Babylon to the land of the Chaldeans; yet shall he not see it, though he shall die there,’ Ezek. xii. 13. ‘He shall surely be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes,’ Jer. xxxii. 4. For Zedekiah was carried to Riblah, where he saw the king of Babylon, and spoke to him, and saw his children executed; but afterwards he had his eyes put out, and was then carried to Babylon, where he was incapable of seeing the city.

9. *He burned the house of the Lord.*—Thus was the celebrated temple built by Solomon reduced to ashes, after it had stood, according to Abp. Usher’s computation, four hundred and twenty-four years, three months, and eight days.

15. *Such things as were of gold, in gold, and of silver, in silver, &c.*—The meaning is, that such things as were of gold, or partly of gold, he took the gold of them away; and such as were of silver, he took the silver of them away. Our present translation is scarcely intelligible.

18. *The second Priest.*—Called by the Jews ‘Sagan,’ who officiated for the high-priest in case of sickness, or any temporary incapacity.

21. *So Judah was carried away.*—This event happened four hundred and sixty-eight years after the beginning of the reign of David; three hundred and eighty-eight years after the revolt of the ten tribes from Judah and Benjamin; and one hundred and thirty-four years after the deportation of the ten tribes.—Abp. Usher.

27. *Evil-merodach.*—This foolish and profligate prince was the son of the celebrated Nebuchadnezzar, who, after having reigned two years at Babylon, became so intolerable on account of his vices and his brutal lust, that at length even his own relations conspired against him and put him to death. It is said, that Jehoiachin was fed by him until the day of his death; and hence it is inferred, that he did not survive him; or that, as one of his favorites, he was slain with him. The last conjecture seems the more probable, as it agrees with the prophecy of Jeremiah, who denounced against him, chap. xxii. 30, that he should not prosper in his days; which could not have been accomplished in him, if he had died in full possession of that prosperity, to which Evil-merodach had advanced him.—Prideaux, An. 559.

I. CHRONICLES.

INTRODUCTION.

THE two Books of Chronicles were formerly reckoned as one; which was entitled the Book of Diaries, or Journals; in allusion to those ancient journals, which appear to have been kept among the Jews. The books of Chronicles, indeed, as well as those of Kings, were probably copied, as to many of their historical relations, from these ancient chronicles of the kings of Israel and Judah. Such chronicles must unquestionably have existed, since in the books of Kings there are frequent references to books of chronicles, as containing circumstances, which are not found in those so entitled in our canon; not to mention that these were written after the books of Kings. The books of Chronicles, which we now possess, were so named by St. Jerome. They are distinguished in the Septuagint as the books of *παραλειπομένων*, that is, ‘of things omitted;’ thus Xenophon wrote the *paralipomena* of the Peloponnesian war, as a supplement to the history of Thucydides; and these are supposed to have been designed as a kind of supplement to the preceding books of Scripture; or to supply such important particulars as had been omitted, because inconsistent with the plan of former books. They are generally, and with much probability, attributed to Ezra; who has used a similar style of expression, and whose book appears to be a continuation of them. Ezra, if he were the author, might have digested them, by the assistance of

Haggai and Nehemiah, from historical records, and the accounts of contemporary prophets.

These books were certainly compiled after the Captivity, as they mention the restoration of Cyrus, and some circumstances which did not occur till after the return of the Jews. The author, however, appears sometimes to speak as one who lived before the Captivity; but this must have been in consequence of his transcribing, without alteration, the accounts of earlier writers.

The books of Chronicles, though they contain many particulars related in preceding books, and supply several circumstances omitted in former accounts, are not to be considered merely as an abridgment of other histories, with some supplementary additions; but as books written with a particular view: in consistency with which, the author sometimes disregards important particulars, in those accounts from which he might have compiled his work, and adheres to the design proposed; which seems to have been to furnish a genealogical sketch of the twelve tribes, deduced from the earliest times, in order to point out those distinctions, which were necessary to discriminate the mixed multitude, that returned from Babylon; to ascertain the lineage of Judah; and to re-establish them on their ancient footing. The author appears to have intended to furnish, at the same time, an epitome of some parts of the Jewish history; and in this first book, taking up the account at the death of Saul, he presents his countrymen with the picture of David's reign; he dilates especially on his zeal for religion, and on the preparations which he made for the building of the temple; probably with a view to excite the reverence and emulation of those who were about to rebuild it. He describes particularly the regulations and arrangements adopted by David, with relation to the priests and Levites, as well as to the appointment of the musicians, and other persons employed in the service of the temple, which David established on a great and magnificent scale;

improving it with the introduction of hymns, of which there is a fine specimen in the sixteenth chapter of this book.

The genealogical tables of this book must have been highly important among the Jews, who were led, by the prophetic promises, to be extremely observant of these particulars. They exhibit the detail of the sacred line, through which the promise of the Messiah was transmitted. The precedence of the several families likewise, and their marriages. Many advantages were often dependent on the accuracy of these accounts; and those, who could not prove their descent, were deprived of many privileges. A regular and unpolluted lineage was especially necessary to those who aspired to the priesthood; and such as could not produce it were deemed incapable of admission to that high office. Ezra, likewise, by pointing out the division of families, as recognised before the destruction of Jerusalem, enabled each tribe, at the return from the Captivity, to be restored to its appropriate inheritance.—*Dr. Gray.*

CHAPTER I.

VER. 7. *Kittim, and Dodanim.*—The Septuagint reads *Podioi*, ‘Rhodii.’ These, and other words in this list of similar terminations, forming the Hebrew plural, are names not of individuals, says Dr. Geddes, but of nations. And it is to be remarked, once for all, that throughout the Hebrew genealogies, the term ‘father,’ ‘son,’ ‘begat,’ and ‘begotten,’ do not always denote immediate procreation, or filiation; but extend to any distant progenitor. Thus, Laban is called ‘the son of Nahor,’ Gen. xxix. 5, though he was only his ‘grandson’ by Bethuel. Similar instances frequently occur in reading the Holy Scriptures.

17. *And Lud, and Aram, and Uz.*—Houbigant reads ‘Lud and Aram. The sons of Uz,’ &c. See Gen. x. 22, 23, where we find that Uz, Hul, &c. were the sons of Aram, and consequently the grandsons of Shem. In general, the term ‘son,’ in Scripture, means one lineally descended from another.

The genealogy in this chapter varies but little from that in Genesis; from which it was probably transcribed.

33. *All these are the sons of Keturah.*]—Rather, ‘All these were the descendants, or progeny of Keturah.’

36. *Timna, and Amalek.*]—In our present text, ‘Timna,’ is reckoned among the sons of Eliphaz; but it appears that she was the concubine of Eliphaz, and the mother of Amalek. See Gen. xxxvi. 12. The Arabic version, and the Alexandrine copy of the Greek, have the true reading, ‘Timna, also, who was the concubine of Eliphaz, bare him Amalek.’

38. *The sons of Seir.*]—Seir was one of the ancient lords of the country, who gave his name to the celebrated mountain so called, which is supposed to be the same as Hor. The whole country is sometimes called Seir, and sometimes the land of Edom, or Idumea. It is the descendants of Seir, who are particularly enumerated in the remainder of this chapter.

CHAP. II. VER. 3. *The sons of Judah.*]—The true reason why Judah is here placed first is, because the Saviour of the world, ‘the desire of all nations,’ was to spring from that tribe, according to the celebrated prophecy of Jacob: ‘The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come.’ Gen. xlix. 10.

6. *Zimri.*]—He is called, (Joshua vii. 18), ‘Zabdi.’ This difference arose, it is probable, from a similarity in the Hebrew letters. The resch ך, or Hebrew *r*, might be easily mistaken for the daleth ד, or Hebrew *d*; and a mutilated mem ם, or some ancient forms of that letter, might very much resemble the beth ב, or *b*. One of its final forms, indeed, is precisely the same. See the copper-plate prefixed to Parkhurst’s Grammar. And it is remarkable, as Euler, the celebrated mathematician, observes, that, in case of a stoppage of respiration through the nose, an attempt to pronounce *m* final, will produce the sound of *b*.

15. *David the seventh.*]—It appears from 1 Sam. xvi. 10, 11, that David must originally have been Jesse’s eighth son. One of his brothers might have died before he was made king.

18. *Caleb begat children of Azubah his wife, and of Jerioth.*]—The Hebrew text is literally, ‘Caleb begat Azubah, wife of Jerioth; and the four words, *children—of—his—of*, are inserted to make out the sense. But the Syriac and Arabic versions seem to have preserved the true reading, which is, ‘Caleb begat Jerioth by Azubah, his wife;’ though in spelling the name, they substitute a ך for the ך, which is frequently done from the similarity of those letters in Hebrew. Some commentators

take 'Jerioth,' or 'Jedioth,' for a daughter. Others consider her as a second wife, or one of Caleb's sons.

35. *And Sheshan gave his daughter to Jarha his servant to wife.*—When the people of the East have no sons, they frequently marry their daughters to their slaves, even when they have much property to bestow on them. Hassan had been the slave of Kamel, his predecessor; but Kamel, according to the custom of the country, gave him one of his daughters in marriage, and left him at his death one part of the great riches which he had amassed in the course of a long and prosperous life.—*Maillet*, Let. xi. p. 118.

49. *The father of Gibeon.*—Gibeon was a city of Benjamin, where Saul was born, and where, after he was anointed king, he established his royal residence. Hence it is called in Scripture, 'Gibeon of Saul,' as well as 'Gibeon of Benjamin.' It was usual to call the founder of a city its father; and sometimes the prince, or chief of it, was so called.—See *Dr. Wells*, vol. ii. p. 10.

CHAP. III. VER. 1. *The second Daniel.*—This son is called, 2 Sam. iii. 3, 'Chileab;' but whether he had two names, or whether there is an error in one of these texts, it is not possible to determine. Other alterations, with respect to names, which occur in the following genealogies, may sometimes be corrected by consulting the parallel passages in Samuel.

3. *Eglah his wife.*—The Jews are of opinion, that Eglah was the same as Michal, the daughter of Saul.—*Bp. Patrick*.

She is called 'his wife' by way of pre-eminence, because she was the first that he had; and, as such, entitled to peculiar privileges.

8. *Elishama—Eliphelet.*—There seems to be a repetition, or an interpolation of some names here, unless we suppose that the Elishama and Eliphelet mentioned ver. 6, were different children, though of the same name.

19. *The sons of Pedaiah were Zerubbabel and Shimei.*—In the catalogue given by St. Matthew, chap. i. 12, Zerubbabel is mentioned as the son of Salathiel. Hence some commentators have thought, with Houbigant, that these words, 'and the sons of Pedaiah,' are an interpolation, or have been inserted by mistake.

22. *Six.*—There are but five enumerated in the text, which number Houbigant would substitute as the true reading. Some think that the name of one of the sons has been omitted.

24. This genealogy, says Dr. Geddes, deduced from David through thirty, or twenty-nine generations, gives room to con-

jecture the period in which the book of Chronicles, or at least this portion of it, was compiled; which must have been thirteen generations after the Babylonish captivity.

CHAP. IV. VER. 3. *These were of the father of Etam, &c.*] The true version of the printed Hebrew is, 'And these are the father of Etam, Jezreel, and Ishma, and Idbash;' and if words ever wanted sense, they do so here. Doubtless, instead of אבִי, 'father,' the original MS. had בְּנֵי, 'sons,' agreeably to all the ancient versions. In 2 Chron. xi. 18, we read that Rehoboam took him to wife Mahalath, בִּן, 'the son of Jerimoth.' Every reader will suppose it to be, not son, but daughter, in the ancient versions; and it is בַּת, 'the daughter,' in some manuscripts. Leusden has here this very odd note: 'Fortè per בִּן, (with a pathah) hic intelligitur uterque sexus.' Perhaps by בִּן, (with a pathah) either sex is here understood.—*Dr. Kennicott*, vol. i. p. 483.

10. *That it may not grieve me.*]—Rather, 'That I might be no more sorrowful.' This is an allusion to the signification of his name in Hebrew. See ver. 9, or the marginal interpretation there.

11. *Chelub.*]—Here is a third Caleb, or Chelub, called the brother of Shuah; but as no mention is made of his father, something, it is conjectured, must have dropped out of the text.

There seem to be some omissions, also, ver. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 20.

12. *The men of Rechah.*]—That is, 'Those are the families who inhabited Rechah.' It is not known for certain, whether this was a city, or a district of country.

13. The name Jephunneh appears to be wanting here.

18. *The sons of Bithiah.*]—These sons are mentioned, but not named. Perhaps the latter part of this verse should be transposed to the middle of verse 17, which Michaëlis thinks is its right place. The Pharaoh mentioned here must not be supposed to be a king of Egypt, but some Israelite called by that name.

21. *Wrought fine linen.*]—'Were manufacturers of cotton.'—*Dr. Geddes*.

22. *Who had the dominion in Moab.*]—*Dr. Geddes's* translation of the latter part of this verse is, 'Who sojourned in Moab, but returned to Beth-lehem and Adaberim-aithikim.' This interpretation is countenanced by the Septuagint version. Certainly the addition in our translation, 'and these are ancient things,' seems strange and unconnected, not to mention

that the Hebrew word is **דברים**, which generally signifies 'words,' not 'things.'

23. *Those that dwelled among plants and hedges.*—The Hebrew words in the original should not have been translated, as they seem to be proper names. The passage might have been rendered, 'Those that dwelt at Netaim and Gedarah.' Houbigant translates the first word, but not the last.

23. *There they dwelled with the king for his work.*—The meaning is, that they resided there, employed by the king in carrying on his work.

24. *The sons of Simeon.*—The Samaritan text, and the Hebrew of Gen. xlv. 10, agree, that 'the sons of Simeon were Jemuel and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul;' which is, therefore, the more probable reading.

27. *Neither did all their family multiply like to the children of Judah.*—This appears from the first muster that was taken of them, Numb. i. 23, where we find that they had amounted to no more than 59,300, when the children of Judah were 74,600, ver. 27; and, at the second muster, Numb. xxvi. 14, 22, there was a far greater inequality.

31, 32. There appears to be an impropriety in our present translation of these two verses, which may be rectified, perhaps, from Josh. xix. According to the division of the text, as it now stands, and from the omission, perhaps, of two words, Etam, and the other cities mentioned after it, are made only 'villages,' though they are, immediately after, called 'cities.'

41. *Unto this day.*—The sense would be more intelligible, if these words were inserted after 'in their rooms.' See ver. 43.

CHAP. V. VER. 2. *The chief ruler.*—By 'the chief ruler' is here meant, first, David, and after him the Messiah, agreeably to the celebrated prophecy of Jacob, Gen. xlix. 10. The Syriac version calls him 'Christ the king,' and the Arabic, 'Messiah the king.'

6. *Tilgath-pilneser.*—A different orthography for Tiglath-pileser, 2 Kings xv. 29. The former part of the name is only a slight transposition of two letters: the insertion of the **ל**, or 'nun,' in the latter, is not so easily accounted for.

11. *And the children of Gad.*—The Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh are joined to the genealogy of Reuben, because they inhabited the same country, and formed a sort of separate colony on the east of the Jordan.

16. *In all the suburbs of Sharon.*—By 'suburbs,' we are to understand the surrounding country. The Septuagint, agreeably to this, has **Πάντα τα περιχωρα**. The district of Sharon

abounded with excellent pastures, and produced the richest wines. The Sharon here mentioned must have been on the east side of the Jordan, because it was inhabited by the Gadites. There was a town of the same name, or rather 'Saron,' (Acts ix. 35.) not far from Lydda, which gave name to the spacious and fruitful valley, which reaches from Cæsarea to Joppa, and is celebrated by the Jewish Rabbis for its wines.—See *Dr. Wells*, vol. ii. p. 236.

18. *Four and forty thousand seven hundred, &c.*—This number agrees nearly with the account given, Josh. iv. 12, 13. See note on Numb. i. 46.

19. *With the Hagarites, with Jetur, &c.*—These appear to have been different tribes of the Ishmaelites, and were all descended from Ishmael, the son of Hagar. The appellation of the first sufficiently denotes their origin.

CHAP. VI. VER. 14. *And Azariah begat Seraiah, and Seraiah begat Jehozadak.*—Seraiah was carried to Riblah by the Babylonish army, and there put to death by order of Nebuchadnezzar; so that in him ended the succession of high-priests under the first temple. Their number from Zadok amounted to twelve. Houbigant thinks, that the Azariah mentioned, ver. 10, was the son of Zadok, 1 Kings iv. 2, and that there is some mistake both here and in the 7th chapter of Ezra, ver. 1. See ver. 10.

27. *Elkanah his son.*—After these words, we may venture to add, 'Samuel his son.'—*Houbigant*.

28. *The first-born Vashni, and Abiah.*—The Syriac and Arabic versions have, 'the first-born Joel, and the second Abiah,' agreeably to 1 Samuel viii. 2.

33. *The son of Shemuel.*—That is, 'The son of Samuel,' the great prophet, whose name, it appears from this, was differently pronounced in different times and places.—*Bp. Patrick*.

39. *And his brother Asaph.*—Frequent mention is made of Asaph in the titles of the Psalms. He is called the brother of Heman, not because he was born of the same parents, but because he was his relation; or, perhaps, because he was his companion, associate, and colleague, agreeably to the latitude of signification given to the Hebrew word מִשְׁכָּן, on which see *Parkhurst's Lexicon*.

44. *The sons of Merari stood on the left.*—Hence it appears, that there were three principal singers, who, in the temple service, directed the choirs. Heman, who was descended from Kohath, was placed in the centre, and is denominated 'the chief musician' in the titles to the Psalms. Asaph, descended from

Gershom, stood on his right hand; and Ethan, who belonged to the family of Merari, was stationed on his left. This order, we may suppose, was observed by their successors.

57. *They gave the cities of Judah.*—The word, ‘Judah,’ here is supposed to be spurious. It is not found in Jablonski’s edition of the Bible, nor in some others.—See *Dr. Kennicott*, vol. ii. p. 487.

Houbigant renders the beginning of this verse, ‘To the sons of Aaron they gave for a city of refuge Hebron, with her suburbs, and Libnah,’ &c. Dr. Geddes reads, ‘To the children of Aaron then were given, out of the cities of Judah and of Simeon, Hebron, a city of refuge, with its suburbs,’ &c.

60. *Thirteen cities.*—There are only eleven here mentioned; but there are two more added in the book of Joshua, viz. Juttah and Gibeon, which make thirteen. See Josh. xxi. 16, 17. Probably they had been destroyed, and were not yet rebuilt when this book was written; or else the omission of them must be attributed to the negligence of transcribers.—*Bp. Patrick*.

70. *Bileam with her suburbs.*—This place is called in the book of Joshua, ‘Ibleam,’ by a transposition of letters not uncommon in all languages.

77. *Out of the tribe of Zebulun.*—On comparing the present text with Josh. xxi. 34, 35, the reader will observe a considerable variation, occasioned by causes, perhaps, which no sagacity of criticism, nor extent of learning, can now discover.

CHAP. VII. VER. 3. *Five.*—There are but four names here; so that one must have been omitted, or the numeral mistaken.

6. *The sons of Benjamin.*—Here we have a genealogy from Benjamin; which is not only confused and corrupted, like some others, but totally inconsistent with that in the next chapter. It differs, also, in some respects, from that in Gen. xlv. 21, and from that in Numb. xxvi. 38, &c. I strongly suspect, says Dr. Geddes, that the genealogy from Dan originally stood here, where we naturally look for it, before that from Naphtali; and indeed one name, at least, belonging to Dan, still remains.

14, 15. The text here seems to be strangely corrupted, and, as it stands, is scarcely intelligible. Dr. Geddes translates these two verses thus; ‘The sons of Manasseh were Ashriel, whom his Syrian concubine bore to him; and Machir Abi-Gilead, whom — bore to him. Machir took for a wife Maacha, sister to Huphim and Shuphim.’ On the words, ‘And the name of the second was Zelophehad: and Zelophehad had daughters,’ he

remarks; 'How this fragment got in here it is impossible to say; but this is not surely its place: nor does it appear to be connected with any part of the genealogy.'

21. *Whom the men of Gath that were born in that land slew, because they came down to take away their cattle.*—This is the only place in the sacred writings, where this piece of history is mentioned, and probably the transaction happened before the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt; for it appears, from the following verse, that Ephraim was alive when these children of his were slain.

This chapter gives no account of the tribes of Zebulun, or of Dan; but why they only should be omitted it is difficult to say. See, however, the note on Rev. vii. 5; where Dan is likewise omitted, in the account which the evangelist gives of the sealing of the tribes of Israel.

40. *The number throughout the genealogy of them—was twenty and six thousand.*—Though these people lived in a rich and delicious country, abounding with wine, oil, and other good things, yet they did not give themselves up to sloth and laziness, but were warlike and valiant.—*Bp. Patrick.*

CHAP. VIII. VER. 1. *Now Benjamin.*—We have no means of reconciling this genealogy of Benjamin with that given, Gen. xlii. 21, or with the account which we have just read in the last chapter. Probably there have been both omissions and corruptions, arising from the carelessness and ignorance of transcribers.

7. *Gera, he removed them.*—That is, Gera was at the head of this colony. Some think, that Ahihud, or Ehud, and not Gera, is here to be understood. Grotius is of opinion, that by the figure zeugma we may read, 'they removed,' and understand that Naaman, Ahiah, and Gera, were the three chieftains, who established that colony in their settlement. Manahath fell to the lot of Judah and Benjamin; but part of it was not yet inhabited.

CHAP. IX. VER. 1. *Israel and Judah who, &c.*—It is not true that Israel and Judah were carried away to Babylon, and therefore Dr. Geddes renders this verse, 'Thus were all the Israelites reckoned by genealogies: and lo! these were found written in the registers of the kings of Israel and Judah; when the Judahites were, on account of their transgressions, removed to Babylon.' Houbigant makes a full stop at Israel, and reads, 'But Judah was carried away to Babylon,' &c. See, also, *Poole's Synopsis*, where the same mode of reconciling the sacred text is proposed by other learned critics.

2. *Now the first inhabitants that dwelled, &c.*]—That is, the first, who, after their captivity, again dwelt, &c.

2. *The Nethinims.*]—These are generally thought by the Jewish interpreters to be the same with the Gibeonites, who performed the most servile offices in the temple, being hewers of wood and drawers of water. Or they were probably remnants of various tribes of Canaanites, of whom Solomon made a sort of public slaves. See 1 Kings ix. 20, 21. They were termed נְתִינִים 'Nethinim,' i. e. 'presented as gifts,' because they were given to the priest, to be employed in servile offices about the temple. See Michaëlis's Comment. on the laws of Moses, art. cxxv.

10. *And of the priests.*]—This catalogue of the priests differs from that given in Nehemiah xi. On this and similar occasions, the biblical student is particularly referred to the learned Dr. Kennicott's first Dissertation.

11. *The ruler of the house of God.*]—Or rather, 'a ruler in the house of God;' for he was not high-priest, that office being filled by Jeshua, or Joshua, as we learn from Ezra iii. 2, and Haggai i. 1. It should be observed, that, by 'the house of God,' is to be understood 'the house of the tabernacle;' for the temple of Solomon had been destroyed, and the second temple was not yet built.

18. *Who hitherto.*]—The Hebrew is וְעַדְהֵנָּה. Houbigant and Dr. Geddes consider עַדְהֵנָּה as a proper name, and render, 'And Adanah was over the eastern gate called the king's.'

33. *They were employed in that work day and night.*]—That is, in learning and teaching to sing and play on different kinds of musical instruments.—Bp. Patrick.

35. Here follows, to the end of the chapter, a repetition of part of Benjamin's genealogy, which Dr. Geddes has incorporated with that given in the last chapter, making considerable alterations from conjecture, the various readings of different manuscripts, and some of the ancient versions. However plausible such criticism may sometimes appear, it is more than counterbalanced by its temerity.

CHAP. X. VER. 6. *And all his house.*]—We are to understand, perhaps, that all those of his house, who were present at this dreadful battle, perished. It is said, 1 Sam. xxxi. 6, 'So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together.' It should be remembered, also, that the word 'all,' in Scripture, must be often taken in a qualified sense. See note on chap. xiv. 17.

CHAP. XI. VER. 1. *Then.*]—That is, as Bp. Patrick observes,

after the death of Ishbosheth; for many events passed between the death of Saul and the transaction which the sacred historian is now going to recite. These events are related in the first four chapters of the second book of Samuel.

15. *Now three of the thirty captains, &c.*—Having considered the variations in the catalogue of David's 'Worthies,' as they are called, the reader is referred to the notes on 2 Sam. xxiii; and if he wishes for further information, he may find it in Dr. Chandler, and in Dr. Kennicott's first Dissertation.

CHAP. XII. VER. 1. *Now these are they that came to David to Ziklag, while he yet kept himself close.*—Sometimes, when a successful prince endeavoured to extirpate the preceding royal family, some of them escaped the slaughter, and secured themselves in an impregnable fortress, or in a place of great secrecy; while others have been known to seek an asylum in a foreign country, from whence they have occasioned, from time to time, great anxiety and great difficulties to the usurper of the crown. The expression in the Hebrew, 'shut up,' strictly speaking, refers to the two first of these cases. When Athaliah endeavoured to destroy all the seed-royal of Judah, that she might herself reign, one child alone was preserved, Joash by name, who was kept with great secrecy, for some years, shut up in a private apartment of the temple, from whence he was brought forth in due time, and actually recovered the crown.

Other princes have shut themselves up in impregnable fortresses, and from thence have given great alarm to their rivals; and, it may be, at length re-established themselves in the government of their hereditary countries, or of part of them.

Those of royal blood, in either of these situations, come, strictly speaking, under this description of persons 'shut up.' But the term may be used in a more extensive sense; for those princes who, by retiring into deserts, or into foreign countries, preserve themselves from being slain by the men who usurp the dominions of their ancestors. Thus, the term is applied to David, though he did not shut himself up, strictly speaking, in Ziklag. It is described as a town in the country, in contradistinction to the royal city of the Philistines, 1 Sam. xxvii. 5, which was at that time, perhaps, an unfortified town; but however this may be, it is certain, that he did not confine himself in Ziklag. He was, on the contrary, continually making excursions from thence, as we are informed, 1 Sam. xxvii. 8, &c. But being there in a state of safety, from whence he might, in some favorable moment, seize the kingdom, the term 'shut up' is applied to him in a less exact sense.

In like manner, Hadad, of the king's seed in Edom, might be described as one 'shut up,' in the time of king David and his son Solomon; for, retiring into Egypt, he continued there, waiting for some opportunity of re-possessing himself of that country.—*Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 377.

19. *And there fell some of Manasseh to David.*—That is, some of the tribe of Manasseh revolted, and joined David.

21. *Against the band of the rovers.*—'Against the hordes of Amalekites.'—*Dr. Geddes*.

32. *The children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times.*—This passage has given rise to a great variety of interpretations. Some think it signifies, that they understood the method of computing the times of the new moon, the beginning of the years and months of the Jews, and the exact time when their feasts were to be celebrated; others, that they were great astronomers; that they could prognosticate the weather, and understand the proper seasons for sowing, planting, reaping, &c. But the true import of the expression seems to be, that they were well versed in political affairs, and knew what was proper to be done in all exigencies of human life, as the words immediately following seem to indicate.—See *Le Clerc*, *Bp. Patrick*, and *Houbigant*.

33. *Not of double heart.*—The meaning is, that they were all sincerely affected towards David, though they were so numerous. *Le Clerc* thinks the number 'fifty thousand,' here, should be only 'five thousand;' for neither the tribe of Judah, nor of Ephraim, which was much more powerful than that of Zebulun, brought so many to David as fifty thousand. See note on *Numb. i. 46*.

38. *Came with a perfect heart.*—The meaning of this expression may be inferred from that of 'a double heart,' used ver. 33. If a double heart be expressive of insincerity, or duplicity, 'a perfect heart,' which seems to be put in opposition to it, must signify a sincere, faithful, and entire attachment to him in whose cause they were enlisted.

40. *Brought bread.*—The Septuagint reads *εφερον αυτοις*, 'brought, them,' which is probably right. The Hebrew word *לָהֶם*, 'to them,' might have been easily mistaken for *לֶחֶם*, 'bread.' If our translators had adopted the former word, it would not have been necessary to introduce the *and* in this verse printed in Italics.—See note in *Harmer*, vol. i. p. 383.

CHAP. XIII. VER. 3. *For we inquired not at it in the days of Saul.*—Or, as the words are in the Hebrew, 'We inquired not about it,' &c. That is, we were not solicitous to find a proper

place for it during the time when Saul governed the kingdom.
—*Bp. Patrick.*

5. *Shihor.*]—Dr. Shaw thinks that this was one of the names of the Nile. The Septuagint reads *Απο όριων Αιγυπτου*, ‘from the borders of Egypt.’ But the Syriac version says expressly, ‘from the river of Egypt.’

6. *Whose name is called on it.*]—Rather, ‘where his name was invoked.’

9. *Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark.*]—This was done without any appearance of an ill intention; but rather, as it should seem, with a well-meant, though rash and officious zeal. It was, however, an irregular and presumptuous invasion of an office not belonging to him. Yet there is reason to believe, that the priests, whose proper business and privilege it was to touch the ark, were not at that time near it, nor employed in their duty; for, in the xvth chapter, David charges the death of Uzza to their neglect of attendance, or of sanctifying themselves, in order to be qualified for entering on the functions of their office. Uzza thus rashly venturing, against the express appointment of God, to rush on holy things, found the price of his presumption was the forfeiture of life; the severity of which execution, though necessary, perhaps, to the sanction of discipline and order, might easily be made up to him in a future state.

The christian œconomy, on a comparison with the Jewish, is a law of liberty, wherein the preference is given to mercy before sacrifice, and cases of necessity will plead with allowance for an equitable relaxation of any positive appointments. But yet let us remember, that the discipline of the Gospel had a solemn sanction in the blood of Ananias and Sapphira, who transgressed it, Acts v. So that a deliberate breach of rule and order, where there is no pretence of necessity, no color of surprise, to excuse it, may still be attended with very terrible consequences, notwithstanding the indulgences of our more favorable dispensation.—*Dr. Marshall.*

CHAP. XIV. VER. 7. *Beeliada.*]—So the Chaldee and Vulgate; but the Septuagint, the Syriac, and Arabic versions, have ‘Eliada,’ and as this is the name in the parallel place, 2 Sam. v. 16, we may consider it as the right reading.

17. *All lands, and—all nations.*]—It has been observed by Noldius and others, that the Hebrew word *כָּל*, ‘all,’ should be rendered according to circumstances. Very frequently, by ‘all,’ the Scriptures mean only ‘the greater part;’ or ‘many.’ Sometimes it signifies ‘complete,’ or ‘perfect;’ and, at others, it is taken, in a more confined sense, for ‘sincere,’ or ‘well-

disposed? But in rendering this verse, our translators have taken no notice of the definite article הַ, which in the original is prefixed to 'lands' and 'nations.' Giving this, therefore, its proper importance in the passage, we should read 'Into all the lands, and upon all the nations;' meaning the different districts and tribes, into which Judea was divided.

CHAP. XV. VER. 2. *None ought to carry the ark of God, but the Levites.*—The Kohathites carried it in their ordinary marches, and therefore had no waggons allotted them; because their work was, 'to bear upon their shoulders.' Numb. vii. 9. But, on extraordinary occasions, as when the ark passed Jordan and encompassed Jericho, the priests carried it. The rule was express, and yet David himself seems to have been unmindful of it, when he put the ark upon a cart, chap. xiii. 5, 7.

20. *With psalteries on Alamoth.*—Houbigant renders, 'with psalteries of a deeper sound.' Dr. Geddes, 'on soft-sounding lutes.' But the ancient versions agree in supposing, that the Hebrew plural here used indicated some musical instruments of brass; and the Septuagint has ἐν κυμβαλοῖς χαλκοῖς, 'on brassen cymbals.' See a very different interpretation of the word עֲלָמוֹת, in the Title of Ps. xlvii.

21. *On the Sheminith to excel.*—The commentators are generally of opinion, that this Hebrew word means 'harps of eight strings;' but as the use of these instruments in the choir is expressed by the verb נָצַח, 'to overcome,' or 'overpower,' which immediately follows, it is probable, that it was a bass instrument tuned an octave lower than the rest. Instead of 'to excel,' as it is in our translation, it may be rendered, 'to complete the harmony.'

CHAP. XVI. VER. 8. *Give thanks unto the Lord.*—This beautiful hymn is nearly the same as Psalm cv. to the 15th verse inclusive. The remainder is chiefly taken from the xcvi. and cvi. Psalms, with some variations, and the addition of verses 34, 35, 36.

22. *Mine anointed.*—Kimchi understands by this appellation, which is in the plural number, 'My great men,' or 'princes;' for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were as much honored by king Abimelech and Pharaoh, as if they had been really invested with the regal office by the usual ceremony of anointing. But St. Jerome is of opinion, that all the Israelites were called 'God's anointed,' when they came out of Egypt; or when they were delivered from their Egyptian bondage, because they were under his immediate protection, and the especial guidance of his providence.

35. *And say ye, Save us, O God, &c.*—This might seem an

improper and unseasonable prayer for David, says Matthew Poole, because the Israelites were not yet scattered among the heathen. But they were divided into factions by a civil war, and he might justly pray for their future union and love. It has been farther said, that this psalm was composed by David for the use of the church in future ages, and that he foresaw by the spirit of prophecy, or by considering the awful predictions in Deut. xxxi. 16, &c. that the Israelites would forsake the worship of the true God, and be dispersed for their apostacy among the heathens, when such a prayer as this would be particularly seasonable and proper.

Others are of opinion, as this verse is not found in either of the Psalms already referred to, that it was added by Ezra after the captivity of the Jews, and that it formed a part of their devotions during that calamitous period. The same petition, in substance, may be found Ps. cvi. 47.

39. *At Gibeon.*]—Though the ark had been removed to Jerusalem, the tabernacle and the great altar for sacrifice, we find, were still at Gibeon, where they remained till the reign of Solomon. Zadok, therefore, with some other priests, and a part of the Levites, were on this occasion sent thither to offer the daily sacrifice, and to perform the other duties of religion; but the greater number of priests and Levites remained at Jerusalem, where the principal worship was performed before the ark, and where Abiathar the high-priest attended.

42. *And with them Heman and Jeduthun, with trumpets and cymbals.*]—Bp. Patrick corrects our translation, and reads more intelligibly, ‘and with them, Heman and Jeduthun, there were trumpets and cymbals for those,’ &c. unless we suppose that the beginning of the preceding verse, ‘and with them Heman and Jeduthun,’ has been here inadvertently repeated by the copyist.

CHAP. XVIII. VER. 16. *Abimelech.*]—Houbigant and others have remarked, that this is erroneously written for ‘Ahimelech,’ the son of Abiathar, mentioned chap. xxiv. 6. Drusius observes, that there were two Abimelechs, one the grandson of Ahitub, and the other the son of Abiathar, who, by a change of a single letter, is here called Abimelech. It is ‘Ahimelech,’ in the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Syriac, and Arabic versions. On these authorities, therefore, the present text might with propriety have been corrected.

CHAP. XIX. VER. 4. *And shaved them.*]—That is, he shaved off their beards, as we read in Samuel; and so, also, the Syriac version in this place.

7. *Thirty and two thousand chariots.*]—Here seems to be

another mistake with respect to numerals. Probably we should read a 'thousand and thirty-two.' Dr. Waterland and Houbigant would read 'thirty-two thousand men with chariots.' See 2 Sam. x. 18. See, also, ver. 6 of the same chapter, from which it appears, that the number of Syrians, not reckoning king Maachah's troops, is exactly thirty two thousand. Hence it appears, that the Hebrew word כב"ד should not here have been rendered 'chariots;' for, taken as a collective noun, the word means, 'cavalry,' or 'riders.' It is probable, that they were a kind of auxiliary troops, who were usually mounted on horses, or in chariots; but who occasionally served also as foot-soldiers.

18. *Seven thousand men, &c.*]—Houbigant renders this, 'Seven thousand horsemen of the Syrians, seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand foot-men.'

CHAP. XXI. VER. 1. *And Satan stood up, &c.*]—The Hebrew word שטן, 'satan,' means 'an adversary,' or 'opposer;' and hitherto, in the Hebrew Scriptures, it has never been taken for the great spiritual enemy of mankind; but has been used sometimes in a good sense, as well as a bad one: Thus, Numb. xxii. 32, the angel of the Lord is called, with respect to Balaam, שטן, 'Satan.'

It should always be remembered, that the books of the Chronicles were not written till after the Babylonish captivity; and though it is said here, that 'Satan stood up and provoked David,' and in the parallel place, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, that 'The Lord moved David to number Israel and Judah;' yet there is no real contradiction in these two texts. The only difference seems to be, that the Jews during their captivity had imbibed some of the notions of the people with whom they resided, and that their phraseology, in consequence, was now somewhat different.

But though they admitted the intermediate agency of an evil being, they still acknowledged the unity and sovereign power of God. Hitherto, they had been accustomed to refer every event directly to Him; but now they seem to have admitted the agency of secondary causes, without infringing, however, on the sovereignty, or independence of God. On the contrary, with more apparent reverence for his attributes, they ascribed all manner of evil, occasionally, to the machinations of that wicked, but invisible spirit, whom they now called 'Satan;' a name which characterises him not only as the promoter of evil, but as the opposer of good.

This evil being, says Bp. Warburton, was little known to the Jewish people till about this time. Their great lawgiver, where he enumerates and warns them of the snares and temptations,

which would lead them to transgress the law of God, never once mentions this great enemy of God and man. When Ahab was suffered to be infatuated, (See 1 Kings, xxii. 19, &c.) Satan is not recorded by name. On the return from the captivity, we find him better known, and things are then ascribed to him as the immediate and proper author, which were before given to the first and ultimate cause of all things. Thus, 2 Sam. xxiv. 1, it seems to be said, that God moved David to number the people: 'The anger of the Lord was kindled—and he moved,' &c. But in the passage before us, which was written after the captivity, Satan is said to have moved David to this folly: for his history having an inseparable connection with the redemption of mankind, the knowledge of them was to be conveyed together; and now their later prophets had given very lively descriptions of the Redeemer, and the other attendant truths.—Div. Leg.

3. *And Joab answered.*—It is evident, that this action of David was thought a very wrong step even by Joab himself, who remonstrated against it, as apprehensive of the bad consequences that might attend it; and therefore Joab counted not Levi and Benjamin, 'because the king's word was abominable to him.' Probably we do not understand all the circumstances of this affair; but Joab's sense of it, who was no scrupulous man, shews that David's conduct in it was extremely imprudent, and might subject his people to great inconveniences. See note on 2 Sam. xxiv. 2.—Dr. Chandler.

5. *All they of Israel were a thousand thousand, &c.*—It is remarkable, that the Syriac version reads the same numbers in this, as in the parallel passage, 2 Sam. xxiv. 9, 'eight hundred thousand;' and it is probable, that this is the genuine reading. See note on Numb. i. 46. The Hebrew text, as it now stands, is, according to our present notation, a million.

20. *And Ornan turned back, and saw the angel.*—Houbigant, agreeably to the account given 2 Sam. xxiv. 20, reads, 'And saw the king.' So also the Septuagint, *Και επεσρεψεν Ορνα, και ειδε τον βασιλεα*, 'And Orna turned about, and saw the king.'

CHAP. XXII. VER. 8. *Thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth.*—The custom which prohibited persons polluted with blood from performing any offices of divine worship, before they purified themselves, is so ancient and universal, that it may almost be esteemed a precept of natural religion, tending to inspire an uncommon dread and horror of bloodshed. In the case of David, it amounted to a disqualification, as it respected the building of the temple. And, with regard to some of the

Israelites, it was the cause of the rejection of their prayers. See Isaiah i. 15.

The Greeks were influenced by the same principle. Euripides represents Iphigenia as arguing, that it was impossible for human sacrifices to be acceptable to the gods, since they do not permit any one defiled with blood, or even polluted with the touch of a dead body, to come near their altars. (Iphig. in Taur. v. 380.) Homer makes Hector say,

Ill fits it me, with human gore distain'd,
To the pure skies these horrid hands to raise,
Or offer heav'n's great sire polluted praise.

Pope, Il. vi. 335.

And, in Virgil, Æneas thus addresses his father, Anchises:

Thou, thou, my sire, our gods and relics bear;
These hands, yet horrid with the stains of war,
Refrain their touch unhallow'd, till the day,
When the pure stream shall wash the guilt away.

Burder's Orient. Cust.

14. *A hundred thousand talents of gold, &c.*—According to Bp. Cumberland's computation, this amounts to more than four hundred and sixty-one millions of our money. Others consider it as equal to the enormous sum of five hundred and forty-seven millions, five hundred thousand pounds. Brerewood makes the whole of the gold and silver amount to 841,125,000 pounds. The calculation must depend on the valuation of the shekel, three thousand of which were equal to a talent.—See *Dr. Kennicott*, vol. i. p. 354; and the chapter on Jewish Coins, Weights, and Measures, in *Proleg.* No. xvi.

Josephus has only, 'ten thousand talents of gold, and a hundred thousand talents of silver.' These different numbers afford a striking instance of the errors arising from the interpretation of Hebrew numerals by adding ciphers. See note on Numb. i. 46.

CHAP. XXIII. VER. 24. *From the age of twenty years and upward.*—On a former occasion, (see ver. 3,) he had made thirty years the necessary age for numbering the Levites; but considering, perhaps, that the temple, which was about to be built, with its courts, chambers, &c. would require a more numerous ministry, he fixed the period, by this subsequent regulation at 'twenty years and upward.' In the time of Moses, the age was twenty-five, or, as others think, thirty. See note on Num. iv. 3.

28. *The sons of Aaron.*—That is, the priests for the time being.

29. *For all manner of measure and size.*]—That is, one part of their office was to take care, that every thing used in the house of the Lord should be of a just weight and measure, according to the standards of the sanctuary.

CHAP. XXIV. VER. 1. *Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron.*]—The meaning is, that the following are the classes, into which the priests, or descendants of Aaron, were distributed.

5. *Thus were they divided by lot.*]—To understand this, it must be remarked, that although the high-priesthood had (see Numb. xxv. 11 to 13) been settled in the line of Eleazar, and in the person of Phinehas, this prerogative was lost at the death of Eli; from which period we find the progeny of Ithamar sharing equally in that dignity with the progeny of Eleazar. Hence, David, to prevent jealousy between the two families, makes this distribution by lot.—*Dr. Geddes.*

5. *Governors of the house of God.*]—The text, without the words introduced by our translators, is ‘governors of God,’ by which, as Houbigant justly remarks, are meant ‘the judges.’ The priests are mentioned before, under the denomination of ‘governors of the sanctuary.’ It has been observed, that the ministers of religion are never called ‘governors of God;’ so that we are to understand by this expression the appointed chiefs, or judges, in the commonwealth of Israel. The addition, ‘of God,’ only indicates the sanctity of their office, or their divine appointment; and, by a very common idiom in Hebrew, might have been rendered as an adjective, being sometimes equivalent to ‘sacred,’ ‘excellent,’ or ‘holy.’

19. *Under Aaron their father.*]—The high-priest is here called Aaron, as being his successor in the holy office, and is said to be ‘their father,’ in the same manner as the ordinary priests were called ‘the sons of Aaron.’ The meaning is, that they were to act under the direction of the high-priest for the time being.

31. *These likewise cast lots over-against their brethren, &c.*]—The meaning is, says Bp. Patrick, that both the elder and younger had their places assigned them by lot, and not by the seniority of their houses. Those who were of greater dignity drew lots against their inferiors, and took their stations and offices accordingly.

CHAP. XXV. VER. 1. *The captains of the host.*]—These were the chiefs, or principals, appointed to preside over the different orders of priests in the ministry.

1. *Should prophesy.*]—That is, should chant, or sing sacred

hymns, accompanied with harps, &c. See the texts referred to in the Index under 'Prophecy,' and 'Prophets.'

2. *Which prophesied according to the order of the king.*]—That is, who set to music the king's sacred compositions, perhaps, and sang or chanted them by the king's order. We have still psalms under the name of Asaph.

3. *Six.*]—There are but five sons of Jeduthun here enumerated. Shimei appears to have been omitted by mistake. As he is mentioned ver. 17, and in the Arabic version, the name, on this authority, might have been supplied here. See the marginal reading.

5. *To lift up the horn.*]—That is, as Bochart and others interpret it, to blow aloud with trumpets made of horns, or in the shape of horns.

Houbigant observes, that this expression is never applied in Scripture to music, and therefore renders it 'to celebrate the praises of God.' The horn was not merely an emblem of power and prosperity, but worn as a real ornament by the Orientalists, on occasions of victory and public rejoicing. See Bruce's Travels, vol. v. p. 89.

The expression in the text, therefore, may regard the prosperity of Heman, to whom God had given a numerous progeny. The following words, 'and God,' or rather 'for God, gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters,' favor this interpretation; but the Arabic version seems to put the matter beyond dispute, which reads, 'These are the sons of Heman, to exalt whose horn the king was moved, or induced, by divine admonitions; for God had given to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.' See the same expression used in this sense, 1 Sam. ii. 1, 10; and compare note on Psalm lxxv. 5.

8. *Ward against ward.*]—That is, one class against another, with a view to determine who should have the preference in any appointments that admitted of it. 'Ward' formerly signified a class, or division. We still apply the term to the different apartments in hospitals; and to the more extensive districts, into which the city of London is divided.

9. *For Asaph to Joseph.*]—After these words, Dr. Geddes supplies, chiefly on the authority of the Arabic version, 'Who with his sons and brethren were twelve.'

18. *Azareel.*]—The name of this same person, in the fourth verse, is erroneously written Uzziel. In the Syriac and Arabic versions, the name in both places is very nearly the same; and therefore the mistake in the Hebrew text might have been safely corrected.

CHAP. XXVI. VER. 1. *The porters.*]—As it appears that the office of a porter was of considerable dignity, and was conferred on men only of the first rank, it would be better to adopt Dr. Delaney's suggestion, and translate the Hebrew word **שַׁעֲרִים**, 'guards.'

15. *The house of Asuppim.*]—Dr. Geddes translates the Hebrew words 'Asuppim,' and 'Shuppim,' in the next verse, and reads, 'and to his sons the guardship of the store-rooms above.' I am convinced, says the Doctor, that the word **שַׁפִּים**, 'Shuppim,' belongs to ver. 15, and have ventured to translate it 'above;' that is, the upper galleries of the temple, where the stores were probably kept, and to which there was an entrance by a winding staircase on the south side of the temple. See 1 Kings vi. 8.

Houbigant's version is nearly the same. Obed-edom is said, 2 Chron. xxv. 24, to have had the custody of the treasures, &c.

16. *The gate Shallecheth.*]—That is, 'the gate of ejection,' out of which, we may suppose, they threw the filth, which, from time to time, accumulated in the temple and its courts.

16. *By the causey of the going up.*]—That is, 'by the raised causey;' or, as Houbigant renders it, 'towards the paved ascent.'

17. *Four a day.*]—Houbigant and others are of opinion, that the Hebrew, **לְיוֹם**, rendered 'a-day,' or 'daily,' was originally **לְלֵוִים**, 'Levites,' repeated after each number. The reader will perceive, that the change consists only in the transposition of a single letter. If this conjectural criticism be admitted, we should read, instead of 'four a day,' 'four Levites.'

18. *At Parbar.*]—The precise signification of this Hebrew word is not known, and therefore our translators did not venture to interpret it. Montanus translates it by 'cellula,' and adds in the margin, by way of explanation, 'domus instrumentorum,' meaning the store-house, where the sacred vessels and implements were kept. But Dr. Geddes thinks that these words belong to ver. 17, and that they might be properly rendered 'at the armoury.' Others are of opinion, that the name of this gate is the same as 'Parvar,' the meaning of which indicates that it led to the 'suburbs.' See *Dr. Lightfoot*.

The repetition of the word is embarrassing as it stands in our translation; but whether it means 'a storehouse,' or 'a gate,' the sense probably is, that, as there were two of them, four Levites were stationed to guard them, two to each. See *Houbigant's Lat. Version*.

CHAP. XXVII. VER. 1. Dr. Geddes's translation of this verse is, 'But a certain number of the children of Israel, pa-

triarchal chiefs, captains of thousands and of hundreds, and other officers, who, on every occasion, attended the king, were divided into courses, who came into waiting, and went out, month by month; each course consisting of twenty-four thousand men.'

The ecclesiastical affairs being settled, says Bp. Patrick, we have next an account of the manner in which the militia, as we may call it, was disposed, in order to render it serviceable on all occasions. It was distributed into twelve legions, each consisting of twenty-four thousand men, who were commanded by one of the chief of the fathers; under whom there were captains of thousands in every legion, similar to what we call colonels, commanding a thousand men. There were also centurions, or captains of hundreds, and under them inferior officers. Each of these legions, for the security of the king and kingdom, attended one month; at the end of which, they retired to their respective places of abode, and another legion succeeded them: so that their course of attendance came but once in a year, which made it an easy duty.

17. *The Aaronites.*]—These were the priests, who were so called from Aaron, the first High-priest.—See ch. xxiii. 28; xxiv. 19.

27. *Over the increase of the vineyards for the wine-cellars.*]—That is, 'over the produce of the vineyards, in the wine-cellars.'

28. *Sycamore.*]—Not what we commonly call by that name; but a species of fig-tree very common in Judea.

28. *And over the cellars of oil was Joash.*]—When our translation represents Joash as over the cellars of oil, in the time of king David, it certainly, without any necessity, and perhaps improperly, substitutes a particular term for a general expression. Joash was at that time, according to the sacred historian, over the treasures of oil; but whether it was kept in cellars, or in some other way, does not at all appear in the original history.

The modern Greeks, according to Dr. Richard Chandler, do not keep their oil in cellars, but in large earthen jars, sunk in the ground, in the areas before their houses. This custom might obtain among the Jews. As it was needless, therefore, it must be improper, to use the particular term 'cellars,' when the original uses a word of the most general signification.

It is certain, that they sometimes buried their oil under ground, in order to secrete it in times of danger; on which occasions they must be supposed to choose such places in their fields, for the purpose of concealment, as would be least suspected. Whether the Jews used to bury it, at other times, in

their court-yards, cannot be so easily ascertained. See Jer. xli. 8.—*Harmer*.

CHAP. XXVIII. VER. 2. *And for the foot-stool of our God.*]—The conjunction ‘and’ is here explanatory, and should have been rendered, ‘that is,’ or ‘namely,’ the ark being considered as the foot-stool of God, because it was under the mercy seat. With this connection, the passage before us will agree with the following expression of Jeremiah, ‘How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not *his foot-stool* in the day of his anger!’ Lam. ii. 1.—See *Bp. Patrick*.

18. *The chariot of the cherubims.*]—The Hebrew word here seems to be improperly translated ‘chariot.’ Dr. Geddes renders it, ‘For the designed supporter of the golden cherubs.’ Houbigant would read, ‘For the attitude and position of the cherubim.’

Other commentators are of opinion, that the word ‘chariot’ may be here taken metaphorically, since God is said, Ps. xviii. 10, ‘To ride upon a cherub, and to fly.’ See Parkhurst on the word כְּרֻב. ‘Cherubims’ is improper; for it is the Hebrew plural, with the sign of the English plural (s) superadded.

19. *All this, said David, the Lord, &c.*]—‘The whole of the works of this plan was described according to the intelligence which he had received from the Lord.’—*Dr. Geddes*.

In order to render the present text more intelligible, we may be permitted to read, ‘All this, said David, the Lord made me understand as if in writing,’ &c.—See *Bp. Patrick*.

CHAP. XXIX. VER. 3. *Of mine own proper good.*]—That is, ‘Of my own private property.’ At present, we only use the plural ‘goods,’ to designate property, or personal effects.

29. *The book of Samuel the Seer.*]—‘It is probable,’ as *Bp. Patrick* observes, ‘that Samuel began to write a history of the life of David, which Nathan and Gad finished; and that out of this the matters here recorded were extracted.’

30. *And the times that went over him.*]—By ‘the times,’ we are here to understand the revolutions, vicissitudes, and perilous events, which he had to encounter. Houbigant follows the Septuagint version; and, instead of ‘The kingdoms of the countries,’ in this verse, reads, ‘The kingdoms of the land;’ that is, the sub-divisions of Canaan into districts, according to the different tribes.

II. CHRONICLES.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS Book, as well as the former, with which it was originally united, was probably collected by Ezra, from the writings of the different prophets, who are severally mentioned in Scripture, as the historians of their respective periods, as well as possibly from ancient Chronicles, which are supposed to have existed, and which may be conceived to have been composed by the priests, some of whom are called ‘memorialists,’ or ‘recorders,’ as Jehoshaphat, and Joah, the son of Asaph.

The book begins with a description of the reign of Solomon, and dilates, with particular exactness, on the munificent piety of that monarch, in the construction of the temple, minutely specifying its ornaments, some of which may be considered as typical of spiritual decorations, which were to embellish the Christian church; a subject highly interesting and useful to the Jews, who, at the time when this book was written, were preparing to rebuild the temple. Hence, the account of the solemn consecration of the first building; of the noble and comprehensive prayer of Solomon; and of the covenanted promises, which God graciously imparted at the dedication, and which must have furnished much consolation to the Jews, scarcely yet reviving from the despondence of captives. Then is repeated from the Book of Kings, the re-

presentation of the magnificence and prosperity, which Solomon enjoyed, agreeably to God's promise.

After this, we are furnished with a recapitulation of the history of the kings of Judah, occasionally intermixed with relations respecting Israel, when connected with Judah. Great part of this history is selected either immediately from the Book of Kings; or both Kings and Chronicles were copied from some larger annals, known under the title of 'The Books of Kings;' since frequent references are herein made to some books of kings, and occasionally for the confirmation of circumstances not extant in the canonical books.

These accounts, however, in the Books of Chronicles, are enriched with many additional particulars. They present us with a lively picture of the state of the kingdom of Judah; and of the various vicissitudes and revolutions, which it sustained under different princes. They serve, as the author seems to have designed, greatly to illustrate the necessity of depending on God for defence, without whose protection kingdoms must fall. The advantage derived from obedience to God, and the miseries that resulted from wickedness and sin, are strikingly shewn. The book abounds with useful examples; and the characters are forcibly displayed by a contrasted succession of pious and depraved princes. The change and defection even of individual persons, and their decline from righteousness to evil, are shewn with much effect. The rebellion of Israel, and the contest between the two kingdoms; the preservation of Joash from the destruction, which overwhelmed the rest of the house of Judah; the struggles between idolatry and true religion; the opportune discovery of the copy of the law; with many other interesting particulars, which exhibit the interposition of the Almighty, defeating evil, and effecting his concerted purposes, deserve to be considered with great attention.

This second book contains a brief sketch of the sacred history, from the accession of Solomon, A. M. 2988, to the re-

turn from the captivity, A. M. 3468: a recapitulation not only very useful to the Jews, but reflecting great light on other parts of Scripture, and exhibiting some coincidence with the narratives of profane writers. The two books, jointly considered, furnish a compendium of the Jewish history. In almost all the Hebrew manuscripts, they are placed as the conclusion of the Bible. In most of the versions, as in our translation, they immediately succeed the books of Kings, and precede the book of Ezra. This appears to be the proper and original order, which is supported by the Cambridge manuscript.—*Dr. Gray.*

CHAPTER I.

VER. 3. *Solomon went to the high-place that was at Gibeon.* Though the tabernacle and the altar made by Moses in the wilderness were now at Gibeon, yet the ark of the covenant was in the city of David. Conrade Pelicanus supposes the reason of their being separated was, that, even in those days, God intimated to the Israelites his disregard of ceremonial worship, while the people were under the command of such men as Samuel and David, and did not exact from them so many legal services as he did in times of peace and prosperity, when they were liable to fall into superstition, and to be corrupted by the idolatry of the heathens.

Notwithstanding this explanation, the Jews have often been pressed with such questions as these: How happened it, that, in the days of Samuel and David, the worship of God, as established by the laws of Moses, was not observed with more precision? How came the ark to be separated from the altars, when the latter were made for the former? Who gave David a dispensation, or permission, to build another tabernacle for the ark, and to neglect that which had been constructed by Moses? And how came Solomon to sacrifice in a different place from that which the Lord had chosen?—*Bp. Patrick.*

11. *Riches, wealth.*—These words seem almost synonymous in English; but, in the original, the former may denote possessions of any kind; the latter, נכסים, such riches as are usually counted; as precious stones, money, and particularly

such sums, perhaps, as were paid in tribute. See the Lexicons on the word **שֶׁטֶל**, from which our word 'cash' seems to be derived.

14. *Chariot-cities.*]—Cities where the chariots, and the horses belonging to them, were kept.

16. *And Solomon had horses, &c.*]—See the note on 1 Kings x. 28. Moses had expressly prohibited the multiplying of horses, Deut. xvii. 16, by which future kings were forbidden to establish a body of cavalry; because this could not be effected without sending into Egypt, with the people of which country the Lord had forbidden any communication, as the most dangerous of all foreign commerce to true religion. When Solomon had violated this law, and multiplied horses to excess, (1 Kings iv. 26.) it was soon attended with those fatal consequences, which the law foretold. For this wisest of kings having, likewise, in violation of another law of Moses, married Pharaoh's daughter, the early fruits of this intercourse; and then, by a repetition of the same crime, but by a transgression of another law, having espoused more strange women; (1 Kings iii. 1. xi. 1.) they first, in defiance of a fourth law, persuaded him to build them idol-temples for their use; and, afterwards, against a fifth law, still more fundamental, they induced him to erect other temples for his own.

Now, the origin of all this mischief was the forbidden traffic with Egypt for horses; for thither, we are told, in this and the next verse, the agents of Solomon were sent to mount his cavalry. Nay, this great king even turned factor for the neighbouring monarchs, ver. 17. This opprobrious commerce was kept up by his successors, and was attended with the same pernicious consequences. Isaiah, with his usual majesty, denounces the mischief of this traffic, and foretels that one of the good effects of relinquishing it would be the forsaking of their idolatries. Isaiah xxxi. 1, 4, 6, 7.—See Div. Leg. vol. iii. p. 289.

CHAP. II. VER. 7. *That can skill to grave.*]—The verb 'skill' is now obsolete. The meaning is, 'A man that is skilful in graving.' By 'cunning men,' also, are meant, in the language of our Translation, such as are skilful and clever in their respective professions. For information on the books of the Chronicles, the reader is referred to the notes, which have been already given on many of the parallel texts.

10. *Beaten wheat.*]—This was probably a coarse kind of meal, made by crushing the grains of corn, without sifting, or separating the bran from the flour. Some of the Jewish

Rabbis interpret it, 'fine flour;' but it is scarcely possible to produce fine flour by the process of beating; nor is it likely that such would have been given to 'hewers of timber.'

CHAP. III. VER. 3. *After the first measure.*]—That is, 'according to the ancient measure;' or, as the Syriac and Arabic versions read, 'according to the standard measure of the sanctuary.' It is literally in the Hebrew, 'of the former measure;' and hence we may conclude, that another sort of cubit was in use when this book was written; which may serve to reconcile some variations in the historical books of Scripture, with respect to numbers, when applied to weights and measures.

4. *And the height was an hundred and twenty.*]—This is a very different account from that in the book of Kings, where it is said to be only 'thirty cubits.' Some think, therefore, that the porch was but thirty cubits high, whereas the temple itself was an hundred and twenty. Others are of opinion, that the porch and temple were of the same height; but the height of the ceiling from the floor was only thirty cubits, though above the ceiling there were chambers, or upper rooms, ninety feet high. The Arabic version has only 'twenty cubits.' The Hebrew word meaning 'cubits,' it has been observed, was easily changed into that which means 'an hundred.' The former is *למט*, and the latter is *מאה*, or *ממ*.

6. *And he garnished the house with precious stones for beauty.*]—Houbigant reads, 'And he paved the floor with beautiful and excellent stones.' The Vulgate has, *pretiosissimo marmore*, i. e. 'with most costly marble.' Our translation means that they were very valuable on account of their beauty.

6. *Gold of Parvaim.*]—Bochart and others are of opinion, that this was the name of a place, probably Ceylon, from which the gold was imported. Others think that it is expressive of the quality and color of the metal.

9. *The upper-chambers.*]—Rather, 'the ceilings.'

15. *Thirty and five cubits high.*]—So the Septuagint, the Chaldee, and Vulgate. But the Syriac and Arabic versions have, 'eighteen cubits high,' which appears to be the true reading. Compare 1 Kings vii. 15; and Jer. lii. 21. One cause of these variations from the Hebrew text, in the different versions, may be, that some reckoned by the ancient cubit, and others by the modern. See note on ver. 3.

CHAP. IV. VER. 3. *Under it was the similitude of oxen.*]—Houbigant translates, 'The similitude of grapes,' both here and in the last clause of the verse. See the parallel text, 1 Kings vii. 24, 25.

3. *Two rows of oxen were cast, when it was cast.*]—That is, according to Kimchi, the oxen and the sea were cast, or fused at the same time, and not fastened together afterwards.

5. *Three thousand baths.*]—In 1 Kings vii. 26, it is said only ‘two thousand baths,’ which may be reconciled by supposing that the quantity of water, which was commonly in it, was two thousand baths; but if it were filled up to the top, it would hold three thousand.

21. *Perfect gold.*]—That is, the purest gold.

22. *And the entry of the house, &c.*]—Cappellus, Houbigant, and Dr. Geddes, are persuaded that we should read, agreeably to 1 Kings vii. 50, ‘The hinges also of the doors of the inner house,’ &c. It was very easy, in transcribing, to mistake the word פתח for פתות, particularly as the *vau* in some Hebrew manuscripts is little more than a dot.

CHAP. V. VER. 6. *Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel that were assembled, &c.*]—Nothing could be more pleasing than to see such harmony as appeared to subsist, on this occasion, among all orders of men; both teachers and learners, magistrates, soldiers, and people, all joined in promoting the service and honor of God. Certainly we, who call ourselves Christians, should carefully study to promote such unity among ourselves, that we may all form one fold, under the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.—See *Bp. Patrick*.

13. *It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, &c.*]—We do not meet in the whole book of God with a more signal instance of his favorable acceptance of that devout employment, which consists in praising him, and giving him thanks with voices and instruments of music, than we have in this chapter. We find it making a very considerable part of one of the most eminent solemnities of religion recorded under the legal dispensation. This solemnity was regulated by the wisest among men, and every part of it was suited to the gravity and majesty of the occasion. We find, therefore, that, according to God’s method of proceeding with the Jewish people, whose more eminent acts of piety he usually honored with some sensible demonstration of his favor, he manifested his approval of this devout solemnity, by filling the temple with his glory, and by giving visible tokens of his more immediate presence. We may hence observe, that music, whether vocal or instrumental, may both innocently and profitably be made use of in the public service and worship of God; and that the proper office of music, in the service of God, is ‘To praise him, and to give him thanks, because he is good, and because his mercy endureth for ever.’—*Dr. Brady*.

CHAP. VI. VER. 5. *Neither chose I any man, &c.*]—He had

chosen Saul, see 1 Sam. ix. 17; and it is said, 1 Kings viii. 16, 'I chose David to be over my people Israel.' The declaration in this text, therefore, must be understood of a more durable election and regular succession. The whole clause is wanting in the parallel place; and it is not found either in the Syriac, or Arabic version.

28. *If there be dearth in the land.*—The causes of famine, enumerated here, are: 1. Pestilence. 2. Blasting. 3. Mildew. 4. Locusts; and 5. Caterpillars, according to our translation; with which may be compared the following passage of that very intelligent traveller, Sir John Chardin, in the second volume of his Travels.

'Persia is subject to have its harvest spoiled by hail, by drought, or by insects; either locusts, or small insects, which they call 'sim,' which are small white lice. These fix themselves on the foot of the stalk of corn, gnaw it, and cause it to die. It is rare for a year to be exempt from one or other of these scourges, which affect the ploughed lands and the gardens,' &c.

The enumeration by Solomon, and that of this modern writer, though not exactly alike, yet resemble each other so nearly, that one might be inclined to believe, these small insects are what Solomon meant, by the word translated, 'caterpillars' in our English version.—*Harmer*.

41. *Now therefore arise, O Lord God, &c.*—These words are nearly the same as Ps. cxxxii. 8, 9. Solomon uses them in this address to God, to beseech Him, that his holy presence may always dwell in the temple which he had built, and to give his grace to the priests who ministered to Him, that they might obtain blessings for others; so that all the people might rejoice in his goodness, and be safe under the shadow of his wings.

42. *Turn not away the face of thine anointed.*—That is, 'reject not thine anointed;' or 'repulse him not,' agreeably to the interpretation of this phrase in the Syriac and Arabic versions. See 1 Kings ii. 16.

42. *The mercies of David thy servant.*—Dr. Geddes renders it, 'The pious deeds of thy servant David.' The Syriac version has, 'Remember the good actions of thy servant David;' and the Arabic, 'But call to mind the virtues of thy servant.'

CHAP. VII. VER. 5. *A sacrifice of twenty and two thousand oxen, &c.*—The number of sheep and oxen here mentioned has to some appeared incredibly large; but it must be considered that a prodigious number of persons were now at Jerusalem, and that the festival lasted twenty-two days. See Hist. of Jews, ch. xxvii. p. 316.

13. *If I shut up heaven, &c.*]—Famine and pestilence were two severe punishments inflicted on the Jews by God for their sins. The former was sometimes caused by want of rain, and sometimes by locusts, which devoured all the fruits of the earth.

CHAP. VIII. VER. 5. *Also he builded Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether, &c.*]—Only the nether Beth-horon is mentioned, 1 Kings ix. 17. They were, however, both built before this time; so that Solomon only fortified, repaired, enlarged, and beautified them. Such is frequently the meaning of the verb ‘to build’ in Scripture.

CHAP. IX. VER. 4. *There was no more spirit in her.*]—An Hebraism expressing the highest degree of astonishment. The Septuagint has ἐξ ἑαυτῆς ἐγχευετο, ‘she was transported,’ or ‘beside herself.’ See note on the parallel text, 1 Kings x. 5.

11. *Terraces to the house of the Lord.*]—Rather, ‘balustrades,’ ‘corridores,’ or ‘balconies.’

17. *And overlaid it with pure gold.*]—We are not to understand that it was entirely overlaid with pure gold, so as to conceal the ivory; but that it was inlaid, or chased with gold.

24. *And they brought vessels of gold, and raiment, &c.*]—Thevenot tells us, that it was a custom in Egypt, in his time, for the consuls of the European nations to send the basha a present of so many vests, and so many besides to some officers, both when a new basha came, and when a new consul entered his office, as were valued at above a thousand piastres. Does not this last account remind us of the presents that were made to Solomon, by the neighbouring princes, at set times, part of which, we are expressly told, consisted of raiment?

This may be thought not to agree very well with a remark of Sir J. Chardin, ‘that vestments are not presented by inferiors to superiors, or even by an equal to an equal:’ but there is really no inconsistency. Vestments are not the things that are chosen by those who would make a present to the great, in common; but they may be ordered to be sent as a sort of tribute, or a due, which superiors claim.

The other things mentioned in this passage of Chronicles, ‘vessels of silver and vessels of gold, harness and spices, horses and mules,’ still continue to be thought fit presents to the great. So Dr. Russell tells us, in his account of the Eastern visits, that if it is a visit of ceremony from a basha, or a person in power, a fine horse, sometimes with furniture, or some such valuable thing, is made a present of to him on his departure; and the Baron Fabricius, in his letters concerning Charles XII, of Sweden, tells us, that when he was seized at Bender, the house

being set on fire, the rich presents that had been made him, consisting of tents, sabres, saddles, and bridles, adorned with jewels, rich housings, and harnesses, to the value of 200,000 crowns, were consumed. With regard to the rest, 'the vessels of silver and the spices' may be illustrated by that story of D'Herbelot concerning Akhschid, the commander of an eastern province, who is said to have purchased peace of Jezid, general of the troops of one of the khaliffs, by sending him a present of seven hundred thousand drachms of silver in ready money; four hundred loads of saffron, which that country produced in abundance; and four hundred slaves, who each of them carried a rich turban of silk in a silver bason.—*Burder's Orient. Cust.*

29. *Are they not written in the book of Nathan the prophet, &c.*—Abarbanel is of opinion, that there were two books of the acts of Solomon; one of which gave an account of the beginning of his reign, his magnificent buildings, and the splendor in which he lived, written by Nathan, the prophet; the other recorded those events, which happened in the latter part of his life, his idolatrous practices, and the punishments with which he was threatened, written by Ahijah, the Shilonite, and Iddo, the seer.

CHAP. X. VER. 10. *My little finger, &c.*—See note on 1 Kings xii. 10.

19. *And Israel rebelled, &c.*—Rather, 'Thus the Israelites rebelled against the house of David, and remain in a state of revolt unto this day.'

CHAP. XI. VER. 13. *And the priests and the Levites.*—It appears from this, that the tribe of Levi was added to that of Judah. Some portion, also, of the tribe of Simeon seems to have been united with it; for we read, ver. 6, that Rehoboam built, or at least repaired and fortified, Etam, which was a town belonging to the tribe of Simeon.—See *Bp. Patrick*.

15. *The devils.*—The Hebrew word שְׂעִירִים, which we translate 'devils,' says Bp. Patrick, signifies no more than 'goats,' which were worshipped in Egypt; and as Jeroboam was lately come from that country, he brought this species of idolatrous worship with him. The devils, or rather the dæmons here mentioned, nearly resembled those fabulous beings, which were afterwards known in the ancient classics under the denomination of Satyrs. The sylvan deity, Pan, was supposed to preside over them, who, in his lower parts, is always represented in the likeness of a goat.—See *Bochart, Hieroz. lib. ii. cap. iii. p. 643*; and note on Matt. iv. 24. § 1.

Perhaps the term 'devils' was used by way of abhorrence and disgust, to denote the 'golden calves,' which were the idols of Jeroboam's idolatrous worship.

23. *And he desired many wives.*—That is, he desired and procured many wives for them.

CHAP. XII. VER. 3. *The Lubims, the Sukkiims, and the Ethiopians.*—The Lubims were certainly the ancient inhabitants of Libya, and were so called from an Arabic word, *Lub*, which signifies 'dry,' or 'thirsty.' The Sukkiims are the same people that are called Troglodites, and lived near the Red-sea. They are so called, because they lived *εν τρωγλαις*, i. e. in dens or caves. Their Hebrew appellation in this verse is derived from a word, which has the same signification. See the Lexicons under the radical **ת**, to 'hide, cover, overshadow,' &c. Bochart observes, that there was a town on the coast of the Red-sea called from these people 'Succhæ;' and at present it retains the same name with a slight variation, being called 'Suachen.' As to the people denominated **כּוּשִׁים**, 'Cushim,' which we translate 'Ethiopians,' they were evidently the descendants of Cush, and inhabited that country, which lies to the south of Egypt. They were the same as the Scenites in Arabia, and were so called, from the circumstance of their living in tents.—See Bochart, and Bp. Patrick.

13. *Rehoboam was one and forty years old.*—See note on 1 Kings xiv. 21.

CHAP. XIII. VER. 2. *Michaiah, the daughter of Uriel.*—She is called 'Maachah,' 1 Kings xv. 2, and there said to be the daughter of Abishalom, or Absalom. See, also, 2 Chron. xi. 21. It is scarcely possible to reconcile this and similar variations, or to conjecture how they happened. Probably a word has dropped out of the text, and we might venture to read, with Dr. Geddes, 'The daughter of *Absalom Ben-Uriel* of Gibeah.'

3. *Four hundred thousand, &c.*—It is probable, that the Hebrew numbers may have been anciently expressed by marks somewhat analogous to our common figures; for several numbers appear to have been greatly corrupted, by the addition, or subtraction, of a cipher: and the numbers of this very passage, instead of 400,000, and 800,000, and 500,000, in ver. 17, were probably at first 40,000, 80,000, and 50,000. On a particular examination of the Latin, or Vulgate version, it appears that the number of chosen men here slain, which the Vulgate of Clement's edition in 1592 determines to be 500,000, the Vulgate of Sixtus, printed two years before, determined to be only 50,000. The two preceding numbers in the edition of Sixtus are 40,000 and 80,000; and in that of Clement they are

400,000 and 800,000. As to the various printed editions, out of fifty-two different editions from the years 1462 to 1592, thirty-one contained the less numbers; and out of fifty-one manuscript copies, twenty-three in the Bodleian library, four in the library of Dean Aldrich, and two in that of Exeter College, contain the less numbers; or else they are corrupted irregularly, varying only in one or two numbers. For further satisfaction on this head, the reader is referred to Dr. Kennicott's Dissert. vol. i. p. 532; vol. ii. p. 197—221, and p. 564. See, also, note on Numb. i. 46.

5. *A covenant of salt.*]—See note on Numb. xviii. 19.

CHAP. XIV. VER. 5. *High-places.*]—Dr. Waterland, with great probability, both here, and in other passages, renders high places, 'altars.' The words are certainly of an indefinite signification. Sometimes they appear to mean hills; sometimes eminences, or military stations of security and defence. Occasionally, they may signify mounds, or hillocks, raised by the labor of man, not unlike our barrows. They may frequently be taken for altars, which were always erected on some eminence; and we may sometimes admit the translation of Houbigant, who considers them as a sort of 'hill-chapels.'

11. *It is nothing for thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power.*]—The meaning is, 'When Thou givest thine efficient aid, it is the same, whether thou givest it to a few against many, or to the weak against the powerful.' The Targum renders it, 'There is none beside Thee, who helpest both the strong and the weak.'

CHAP. XV. VER. 3. *For a long season Israel hath been without the true God.*]—It seems evident, from the first verse, that Azariah was about to utter some prediction, as the spirit of God came upon him, and therefore Houbigant supposes, that the declarations from ver. 3 to ver. 6 inclusive, should be in the future tense. 'Now, for a long time, Israel shall be,' &c. Instead of, 'for a long season,' Dr. Geddes renders ימים רבים, 'for many days;' or, 'for a long season,' by 'often;' and thinks that the prophet refers to the days of the judges.—See, also, Bp. Patrick.

8. *The prophecy of Oded.*]—Two words seem to have been omitted in the text, and we should probably read, 'the prophecy of Azariah, Ben-Oded,' i. e. the son of Oded. So the Vulgate, and other ancient versions. See ver. 1.

15. *They had sworn with all their heart, &c.*]—Doubtless many of them, at that time, actually determined to serve the Lord, who had wrought so many wonders in Israel: but so treacherous is the human heart, that they soon forgot the oath

which they had taken, and relapsed into their former idolatry.—*Fawkes.*

CHAP. XVI, VER. 1. *In the six and thirtieth year of the reign of Asa, Baasha king of Israel came up against Judah.]—*Baasha died in the six and twentieth year of Asa's reign, and therefore could not come up against him in the six and thirtieth year; on which account, the best authors, from Josephus to Houbigant, are of opinion, that an error has crept into the text, by the carelessness of some transcriber; and that it was the six and twentieth year of Asa's reign, which was the last year of Baasha's, that he went up against Judah. See 1 Kings xv. 33.

3. *There is a league.]—*Rather, 'let there be a league;' as it is in the Septuagint.

7. *Hanani the seer.]—*Here again the name of the son seems to have been omitted; for, in the parallel place, (1 Kings xvi. 1.) it is, 'Jehu, the son of Hanani.' See, also, chap. xix. ver. 2.

8. *Were not the Ethiopians and the Lubims a huge host?]*—By the Lubims are meant the people of Libya, who are sometimes in Scripture called Phut, and sometimes Lubims. That these people inhabited a dry country, parched with excessive heat, and long droughts, is well known. See note on chap. xii. 3.

10. *For he was in a rage with him because of this thing.]—*Houbigant and Dr. Geddes render, 'But Asa, because this rebuke made his people uneasy, was angry with the seer,' &c. The Arabic version reads, 'And Asa, being enraged against the prophet, cast him into prison, because he uttered what he had not seen, and alarmed the minds of the people.'

12. *And Asa was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great.]—*The diseases mentioned in Scripture are described by so few symptoms, that modern physicians scarcely know how to determine them. Such is the case in this instance of Asa: which commentators usually call the gout; of which it is characteristic, that, it seizes rather the rich than the poor.

The original says, עַד-לַמַּעַלָה; i. e. 'proceeding upwards.' The Septuagint renders it, 'εως σφοδρα εμαλκισθη.' If this disease then was the gout, it first attacked his feet, and afterwards ascending to his stomach, became fatal, &c. Scheuzer, however, inclines to that kind of swelling of the feet and legs, which is called œdematous; which, gradually rising higher in the body, degenerates into the dropsy. Either of these notions of the disorder differs from that suggested in our translation.—Companion to the Holy Bible, p. 122.

12. *The physicians.]—*These physicians, it is probable, pre-

tended to cure diseases by means of charms, &c. Such was the practice with all the ancients, which was considered as approaching to idolatry.

14. *And laid him in the bed which was filled with sweet odours, and they made a very great burning for him.*]—It has been asked, whether the body itself was burnt, or only some of the spices and odoriferous drugs, to prevent any bad smell that might attend the corpse. The Greeks and Romans, indeed, when they burnt any dead bodies, threw frankincense, myrrh, cassia, and other fragrant substances, into the fire, and sometimes in the greatest profusion; but the Jews used to inter their dead; and therefore many suppose that the spices only were burnt. Others think, that the body of Asa, as well as the spices, was consumed; adding, that this is the first mention made of burning the dead among the Jews; but it was afterwards very common. Compare 2 Chron. xxi. 19; Amos vi. 10.—See *Bp. Patrick*.

It is not certain that any spices, or aromatic substances, were burnt. Probably, 'the great burning' was considered only as a bonfire in honor of his memory.

CHAP. XVII. VER. 3. *In the first ways of his father David.*] The word 'David' is wanting in the Septuagint, and in six manuscripts. Admitting the present text to be the true reading, Houbigant renders it, 'He walked in the ways of his father, David, first and last.'

6. *He took away the high-places and groves out of Judah.*]—That is, he removed those images, in the form of which, the heathen gods were worshipped; but those altars that were dedicated to the true God he still left. See 1 Kings xv. 14, and xxii. 43.* See also chap. xx. 33. of this book.

7. *He sent to his princes, to teach in the cities of Judah.*]—What the proper business of these princes was, in their circuit round the kingdom, has been a matter of some dispute among the learned. The most probable opinion is, that they admonished the people to observe the laws of God, and left the particular explication of them to those of the sacred order, who formed a part of this mission. Had the laws and precepts of Moses been regularly observed, this could not have been necessary; but they had been much neglected. From this portion of the Sacred History, we may conclude, that the practice of assembling weekly in the synagogues, for the purpose of reading the law, and of attending public prayers, was not yet established.

14. *These are the numbers.*]—There must have been some great error committed here; for the numbers are so prodigious,

that no judicious critic will attempt to defend them. On summing up, they will be found to amount to one million one hundred and sixty thousand mighty men of valor, who waited upon the king in Jerusalem.—*Dr. Kennicott.* See chap. xx. 12.

CHAP. XVIII. VER. 1. *Now Jehoshaphat joined affinity with Ahab.*—We are told, (2 Kings viii. 18) that his son married Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab. It is surprising, that a prince so zealous for the law of God, and so attentive to promote his honor and service, should contract so close an affinity with an abominable idolater. Perhaps he hoped, by this marriage, to re-unite the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, and to bring back the latter to the worship of the true God.

14. *Go ye up, and prosper, &c.*—From the king's answer, in the next verse, he evidently understood, that Micaiah spoke these words ironically.

CHAP. XIX. VER. 4. *Jehoshaphat dwelled at Jerusalem.*—The present text, according to the masoretic punctuation, has 'dwelled;' and so all the versions: but I am fully persuaded, says Dr. Geddes, that 'returned to Jerusalem,' is the true reading.

The original may be rendered, 'After Jehoshaphat had tarried some time at Jerusalem, he went out,' &c. See ver. 1.

10. *And ye shall not trespass.*—Rather, 'If ye would not trespass.'

11. *And the Lord shall be with the good.*—St. Jerome seems to have read, 'And the Lord shall be with you for good;' and this reading is adopted by Houbigant.

CHAP. XX. VER. 1. *And with them other beside the Ammonites.*—Houbigant and Dr. Geddes, on the authority of the Chaldee, and, perhaps, one manuscript, read, 'Together with a party of Edomites.' See verses 10, 22, 23.

2. *From beyond the sea on this side Syria.*—Calmet long since suggested, that we should read 'Edom.' The Syriac and Arabic versions omit the name of the country altogether, and one manuscript has Edom, which is considered the right reading by Houbigant, and others.

6. *And said, O Lord God, &c.*—This prayer of Jehoshaphat is deservedly accounted one of the most excellent that we meet with in Sacred History. He begins with an acknowledgment of God's supreme and irresistible power, which extends every where, over all creatures in heaven and earth, that are alike subject to his authority. Then he remembers the peculiar relation which the people of Israel have to him; the promise he made to Abraham, as a reward of his fidelity; and the deed of gift which he made to him, and his posterity, of his country

for ever, ver. 7. He reminds them of the long possession they had had of the country, and of the temple which Solomon built for his worship; to whom, at the consecration (and therefore he refers to Solomon's words at the consecration, 1 Kings viii.) he promised a gracious regard to all the prayers that should be offered there, ver. 8, 9. In the next place, he represents the foul ingratitude of their enemies in invading a country, to which they had no manner of title, even though the Israelites did them not the least harm when they came to take possession of it, but took the pains to march a long way about to get to it, rather than give them any molestation; and, in aggravation of their wickedness, he suggests, that, by this invasion, they made an attempt, not only upon the rights of the Israelites, but of God himself, who was the great Lord and proprietor, from whom they held the land, ver. 10, 11. Then he appeals to the justice of God, the righteous judge, who helps those who suffer wrong, especially when they have no other helper; for this is the last argument he makes use of, to conciliate the divine assistance; even the weak condition wherein he and his people were, which made them the objects of the divine pity, especially since they placed their hope and confidence in God alone, ver. 12.—*Dr. Dodd.*

23. *The children of Ammon and Moab stood up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, &c.*—These last were ordered to fall upon Judah by an ambuscade; but owing to some mistake, they fell upon the Ammonites, their own confederates. This exasperated them and the Moabites so much, that they destroyed all the inhabitants of Seir, mistaking them for Jews; when this was performed, they continued in such confusion, that they fell upon one another, still imagining they were destroying the Jews.—*Bp. Patrick.*

CHAP. XXI. VER. 2. *King of Israel.*—He was king of Judah, and so almost all the ancient versions call him here. The introduction of 'Israel,' instead of 'Judah,' therefore, was probably a mistake of some transcriber. See *Houbigant.*

11. *And compelled Judah thereto.*—'And made Judah most contemptible.'—*Houbigant.*

Dr. Geddes's translation is, 'He debauched and forced into idolatry the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judah.'

12. *And there came a writing from Elijah the prophet.*—From this it appears, that Jehoram came to the throne, and gave proofs of his apostacy from God, before Elijah's translation. It is true, we find Elisha attending Jehoshaphat, and described as pouring water on the hands of Elijah, after the account of Elijah's translation, 2 Kings iii. 11; but these things might

have happened while Elijah was yet on earth; and it is certain that that history is out of its proper place: for we read of Jehoshaphat's death and Jehoram's coming to the crown, before we read of Elijah's translation, 1 Kings xxii. 50. We may suppose his departure at hand, and that he could not go in person to Jehoram; but being apprised of his great wickedness in murdering his brethren, he left this writing, probably with Elisha, to be sent to the king, that it might either be the means of reclaiming him, or a witness against him. The message is sent him in the name of 'the Lord God of David his father,' upbraiding him with his relation to David, as that which, though it was his honor, was an aggravation of his degeneracy.—See *Bp. Patrick*.

In order to avoid the appearance of an anachronism, some learned commentators would substitute in the text 'Elisha' for 'Elijah.' The names might have been easily confounded by a careless transcriber.

18. *An incurable disease.*]—This is supposed to have been a violent dysentery; a disease which is often attended with an ulceration of the intestines, and with such a discharge of blood, mucus, &c. that the bowels may be said to fall out day by day.—*Dr. Mead, Medica Sacra, cap. iv.*

20. *Without being desired.*]—That is, without being regretted. No one wished him to live any longer.

Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus

Tam cari capitis!—*HOR. Carm. Lib. 1. Od. xxiv.*

CHAP. XXII. VER. 2. *Forty and two years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign.*]—In 2 Kings viii. 26, he is said to be only 'twenty-two years old;' and this is doubtless the true reading: for several ancient manuscripts, as well as the Syriac and Arabic versions, have 'twenty-two' also in this place; and consequently there has been an error committed by the copyist, or transcriber. But this difficulty has been attempted to be solved by supposing that the age of his mother, Athaliah, is here mentioned; for in the original it is, 'He was the son of forty-two years;' that is, the son of a mother who was of that age.

CHAP. XXIII. VER. 2. *The fathers of Israel.*]—Houbigant omits the words 'of Israel.' *Bp. Patrick*, however, is of opinion, that Judah is here called by the general name of 'Israel.'

11. *Gave him the testimony.*]—See note on 2 Kings xi. 12.

14. *Have her forth of the ranges.*]—See note on 2 Kings xi. 15.

18. *The priests the Levites.*—It should be 'The priests and the Levites.'

CHAP. XXIV. VER. 7. *For the sons of Athaliah, &c.*—Dr. Geddes's translation of this verse is, 'For Athaliah having depraved her sons, they had broken up the house of God, and converted all the hallowed things of the house of the Lord to the service of Baal.' So, also, equivalently, the Arabic version.

13. *They set the house of God in his state.*—That is, 'they restored it to its former, proper state.'

22. *The Lord look upon it, and require it.*—These words must be considered as uttered by the spirit of prophecy, and therefore should have been rendered, as Houbigant proposes, in the future tense. 'The Lord *will* look upon this deed and avenge it;' which denunciation was carried into effect: for, before the year was expired, the Syrians came up against Jerusalem, and destroyed all the princes of the people, (ver. 23.) and Joash himself was slain in bed by his own servants. See ver. 25. Many circumstances served to aggravate this barbarous act. Zechariah was a high-priest; and, to kill a priest, though of inferior rank, was a sin among all nations, more than equivalent to the killing of a secular potentate. Farther, to render the crime more heinous, he was a prophet, upright, and unblameable in the discharge of his high offices. This murder also was a pollution of the courts of the Lord's house; for within its precincts Zechariah's blood was shed, without such reverence to the place as Jehoiada his father observed in a case of the extremest exigency; even when the preservation of Joash and his whole kingdom was at stake: for he would not suffer Athaliah, although guilty of murdering the seed-royal, and of high treason against the crown of David, to be put to death within the courts of the temple; but commanded her to be killed at the gates of the king's house, chap. xxiii. 14. On Joash's part, the crime was greatly increased, from this good man's being by blood his nearest of kindred; as he was the son of Jehoshabeath, (ch. xxii. 11.) who was daughter of Jehoram, the sister of Ahaziah, and consequently aunt to king Joash. And to his father Jehoiada he was beholden both for his life and crown.—*Dr. Jackson.*

25. *In great diseases.*—Dr. Geddes reads 'Sorely wounded;' and the Arabic version has, 'They left him dangerously ill.'

25. *The sons of Jehoiada.*—Houbigant reads, in the singular number, 'The son of Jehoiada.' See ver. 22.

CHAP. XXV. VER. 6. *An hundred thousand mighty men of*

valor.—Probably there is some mistake in these numbers, for we are assured, that the people were so greatly reduced, a few years before, that there were left of Israel only fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot-men. See 2 Kings xiii. 7; and note on Num. i. 46.—*Dr. Kennicott.*

8. *But if thou wilt go, &c.*—Dr. Geddes, without altering the text, renders the former part of the verse, ‘If thou go, thou wilt, indeed, acquire more strength for the combat: yet God will make thee stumble before the enemy; for,’ &c.

Houbigant reads: ‘But if thou be so obstinate as to go to war,’ &c. Michaëlis and Dathe, ‘but go thou,’ alone, ‘and fight valiantly; otherwise,’ &c. The latter appears to be irreconcilable with the context.

12. *And cast them down from the top of the rock.*—This mode of punishment was practised by the Greeks and Romans, as well as by the Jews. In Greece, according to the Delphian law, such as were guilty of sacrilege were led to a rock, and cast down headlong.—*Ælian*, Var. Hist. lib. xi. c. 5.

The Romans also inflicted the same punishment on various malefactors, by casting them down from the Tarpeian rock.—*Livy*, Hist. l. vi. c. 20.

Mr. Pitts, in his account of the Mahometans, (p. 10.) informs us, that in Turkey, at a place called Constantine, a town situated on the top of a rock, the usual way of executing great criminals is by pushing them off the cliff.

23. *The son of Jehoahaz.*—It should be, ‘the son of Ahaziah.’ This correction is proposed on the authority of six manuscripts, and confirmed by the account given 2 Kings xi. 2.

CHAP. XXVI. VER. 5. *And he sought God in the days of Zechariah.*—This was not Zechariah the prophet, whose writings are found in the sacred canon; but, in all probability, the son of that Zechariah, who was called after his father’s name, and was eminent for his divine wisdom.

7. *The Mehunims.*—Some commentators conjecture, that these were a people of Arabia Deserta. Houbigant, on the authority of the Vulgate, reads ‘the Ammonites;’ which reading is rendered probable by the mention of these people in the next verse. See, also, chap. xxvii. 5.

10. *He builded towers in the desert.*—William of Tyre describes a country not far from the Euphrates, as inhabited by Syrian and Armenian Christians, who fed great flocks and herds there, but were in subjection to the Turks; who, though few in number, yet living in strong places among them, kept them under, and received tribute from these poor peasants, who inhabited the villages, and employed themselves in agricultural pursuits.

This may give us a truer view of the design of the towers which Uzziah built in the wilderness, than commentators have done, who suppose that they were conveniences made only for sheltering the shepherds from bad weather, or to defend them from the incursions of enemies; for they might rather be designed to keep the nations that pastured there in awe, to prevent their disputing with servants about wells, and also to induce them quietly to pay that tribute, to which the eighth verse seems to refer.—See *Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 428.

15. *Engines.*]—These appear to have resembled the Balista and Catapulta of the Greeks and Romans.

22. *The rest of the acts of Uzziah did Isaiah write.*]—It is certain that Isaiah composed an entire history of the reign of Uzziah, which is now lost; and the book of the wars of the Lord, mentioned Numb. xxi. 14, is a proof, that the histories related in the five books of Moses were also taken from several collections, which are no longer extant.—See *Calmet*, and *Dr. Dodd*.

CHAP. XXVII. VER. 3. *Ophel.*]—This appears to have been a tower, or fort, on the city wall, in which we read (Neh. iii. 26.) ‘the Nethinim dwelt.’ See the Marginal Reading.

6. *So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God.*]—Solomon Jarchi observes on this passage, that all the kings of Judah had some crime or other laid to their charge, except this Jotham; that David himself sinned grievously in the matter of Uriah; that Solomon by his wives was drawn into idolatry; that Rehoboam forsook the law of the Lord, and Abijah walked in his steps; that Asa sent the sacred treasures of the temple to the king of Syria, and put the prophet in prison; that Jehoshaphat entered into society with idolaters, &c. ‘But,’ adds this Jewish writer, ‘in Jotham there is no fault found, except we suppose that the people’s sacrificing and burning incense in high places, 2 Kings xv. 35, should be considered as one, which he by his authority might have removed.’

CHAP. XXVIII. VER. 1. *Twenty years old.*]—It is said, 2 Kings xviii. 2, that he was twenty-five years old when he began to reign. This appears to be the right reading, and it is confirmed by the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

3. *And burned his children in the fire.*]—Rather, ‘And made his sons pass through the fire.’ So the Syriac version. See Levit. xviii. 21. This ceremony was considered as a kind of lustration.

8. *Two hundred thousand.*]—Here again we find great variation with respect to the numbers. One manuscript has only ‘one thousand;’ which may be considered a much more probable

number. But some copies of the Septuagint have 'three hundred thousand;' and one 'eight hundred thousand.' See note on Numb. i. 46.

20. *And Tilgath-pilneser—came unto him, and distressed him, but strengthened him not.*]—It is said, 2 Kings xvi. 9, that he did help him; and therefore it is asked, how he could distress him? But this is easily answered; for as he came to his assistance against the king of Syria, so he took Damascus, carried the people away captive, and delivered Ahaz from the power of the Syrians; but this was of little service to Ahaz, who was desirous of recovering the cities taken from him by the Philistines. He lent him no forces, nor enabled him to recruit his own; on the contrary, he weakened him, both by exhausting his treasures, and by taking Samaria, which laid his country open on that side to an invasion, which actually happened in the next reign.—See *Bp. Patrick*.

27. *And Ahaz slept with his fathers; and they buried him in the city.*]—The Israelites were accustomed to honor, in a peculiar manner, the memory of those kings who had reigned over them uprightly. On the contrary, some marks of posthumous disgrace followed those monarchs who left the world under the disapprobation of their people. The proper place of interment was in Jerusalem. There, in some appointed receptacle, the remains of their princes were deposited: and, from the circumstance of this being the cemetery for successive rulers, it was said, when one died and was so buried, that he was 'gathered to his fathers.' Several instances occur of their not being thus interred with their predecessors, but in some other place in Jerusalem. So it was with Ahaz, who, though brought into the city, was not buried in the sepulchres of the kings of Israel.

In some other cases, perhaps to mark out a greater degree of censure, they were taken to a small distance from Jerusalem. It is said that 'Uzziah was buried with his fathers in the field of the burial which belonged to the kings; for they said, He is a leper.' (2 Chron. xxvi. 23.) It was doubtless with a design to make a suitable impression on the minds of their kings while living, that such distinctions were observed after their decease. They might thus restrain them from evil, or excite them to good, according as they were fearful of being execrated, or desirous of being honored, when they were dead.

The Egyptians had a custom in some measure similar to this; it was however general as to all persons, though it received very particular attention as far as it concerned their kings. It is thus described in Franklin's History of Ancient and Modern

Egypt, vol. i. p. 374. 'As soon as a man was dead, he was brought to his trial. The public accuser was heard. If he proved that the deceased had led a bad life, his memory was condemned, and he was deprived of the honors of sepulture. Thus, that sage people were affected with laws which extended even beyond the grave, and every one, struck with the disgrace inflicted on the dead person, was afraid to reflect dishonor on his own memory, and that of his family.

'But what was singular, the sovereign himself was not exempted from this public inquest upon his death. The public peace was interested, in the lives of their sovereigns, and in their administration; and as death terminated all their actions, it was then deemed for the general welfare, that they should suffer an impartial scrutiny by a public trial, as well as the most common subject. Even some of them were not ranked among the 'honored dead,' and consequently were deprived of public burial. The Israelites would not suffer the bodies of some of their flagitious princes to be carried into the sepulchres appropriated to their virtuous sovereigns. The custom was singular, and the effect must have been powerful. The most haughty despot, who might trample on laws human and divine in his life, saw, by this solemn investigation of human conduct, that at death he also would be doomed to infamy and execration.'

What degree of conformity there was between the practice of the Israelites and the Egyptians, and with whom the custom first originated, may be difficult to ascertain; but the conduct of the latter appears to be founded on the same principle as that of the former; and, as it is more circumstantially detailed, affords us an agreeable explanation of a rite but slightly mentioned in the Scriptures.—*Burder's Orient. Cust.* vol. i. p. 92.

CHAP. XXIX. VER. 19. *Did cast away.*]—The Septuagint and Vulgate read, 'which he had defiled, or profaned.' This is probably the right reading.

21. *And seven he-goats.*]—It is remarkable, that the word צִפִּיר, which here signifies a 'he-goat,' was not used by the Hebrews till after the Babylonish captivity, when we find it in Daniel, chap. viii. 21, who lived at the time of the captivity. It being used by Daniel in that place, and no where else, is an argument that this book was written by Ezra, after the return of the Jews from that captivity, during which he had learned the Chaldee language, and thence mixed some Chaldee words with the Hebrew, of which this is one.—*Bp. Patrick.*

CHAP. XXX. VER. 5. *Throughout all Israel.*]—Hezekiah,

it has been said, had no right to invite Hoshea's subjects to repair to Jerusalem, to the celebration of his passover; yet for the doing of this we may well presume that he had encouragement from Hoshea himself; who, as to the matter of religion, has a better character in Scripture than any of his predecessors since the division of the two kingdoms. But the truth was, that both the golden calves, which had caused this political separation, were now taken away: that of Dan, by Tiglath-pileser, and that of Beth-el by his son Shalmaneser; and therefore the apostate Jews, being thus deprived of their idols, began to return to the Lord, and to go up to Jerusalem to worship, some time before Hezekiah gave them this invitation to his passover.—See *Prideaux*, Ann. 729.

5. *For they had not done it, &c.*—Dr. Geddes renders, 'which had not for a long time been done as by law prescribed.'

6. *The posts.*—Rather, 'messengers,' of the same kind as the running footmen, who were formerly, before the establishment of posts, employed on similar occasions. The Hebrew word is רצים, 'runners.'

20. *Healed the people.*—Restored them from the miserable and diseased state of guilt and sin to repentance and amendment of life.

CHAP. XXXI. VER. 2. *In the gates of the tents of the Lord.*—The Hebrew is בשערי מחנות יהוה; that is, 'Within the gates of the camps of the Lord;' this comprehended the whole space inclosed by the outer wall, which surrounded the temple.

15. *Miniamin.*—Houbigant conjectures that this should be 'Benjamin.' Some manuscript forms of the *beth* and *mem* are very much alike. See the plate facing p. 1. in Parkhurst's Grammar.

16. This verse has given much trouble to translators; who seem, to me, says Dr. Geddes, not to have understood the original. The meaning, perhaps, is;—that such Levites, under twenty, as came to do any office, with their fathers, about the temple, were entitled to a daily portion independent of that given to their fathers. They are reckoned from three years old, because that, among the Jews, was the period of weaning.

18. *For in their set office they sanctified themselves in holiness.*—Houbigant translates, very differently, 'Because the sacred gifts were committed to their trust.'

CHAP. XXXII. VER. 4. *Who stopped all the fountains, &c.*—As a plentiful fountain was very necessary in those places where armies were accustomed to rendezvous; so the want of water must have been very distressing in any after-

encampments, in pursuing a war, especially when they had to stay any time under such a privation.

The thought then of Hezekiah, who proposed to his princes the stopping of all fountains, and the brook that ran through the midst of the land, when Sennacherib was making his approaches to Jerusalem, was on this account very natural; but it may be thought to be a proof of the great simplicity of antiquity, to entertain such a thought; and more so, if he was able to effect his scheme. How could fountains and a brook be so stopped as totally to be concealed? How easy was it for such a mighty army as the Assyrians to sink a multitude of wells!

But odd as this contrivance may seem, it was actually made use of at the same place, many centuries after Hezekiah's time, and greatly perplexed an European army, and that too assembled from various warlike countries. For William of Tyre, describing the besieging of Jerusalem by the Croises in 1099, tells us, that its inhabitants having had advice of their coming, stopped up the mouths of their fountains and cisterns for five or six miles round the city, that, being overwhelmed with thirst, they might be obliged to desist from their design of besieging it. This management of theirs, he informs us, occasioned infinite trouble afterward to the Christian army: the inhabitants in the mean time not only having plenty of rain water, but enjoying the benefit of the springs too without the town, their waters being conveyed by aqueducts into two very large basins within it. These precautions, indeed, did not hinder the Croises from persevering in the siege from June 7, to July 15, and succeeding at last; but, he says, the army was distressed with thirst in the most terrible manner, notwithstanding it had the assistance of some of the Christian inhabitants of Bethlehem and Tekoa, who, being in the army in considerable numbers, conducted the people to fountains at four or five miles distance. For, as to the nearer neighbourhood of Jerusalem, it was a very dry and unwatered soil, having scarcely any brooks, or fountains, or pits of fresh water, and all those they filled up with dust, and by other means, as much as they could; and either broke down the cisterns of rain water, or maliciously hid them, that they might be of no advantage to the pilgrims. And, as for those distant fountains to which they were conducted, there was such pressing, and hindering one another from drawing, that it was with difficulty, and after long delays, that they got a little muddy water in their leather bottles, of which a draught could not be purchased but at an extravagant rate. As to the fountain of Siloam, which was near, sometimes

it had no water, and sometimes when it had, it was not agreeable to drink, so that it did not by any means afford the army a sufficient supply. The men, however, made a shift, one way or another, to save themselves from perishing by thirst; but the horses, mules, asses, flocks, and herds, died in great numbers, and occasioned a dangerous, pestilential corruption of the air. The besieged in the mean while, by their frequent sallies, cut off great numbers of those that were dispersed about in search of provisions and forage.

The stream which flowed from Siloam is, I presume, the brook that Hezekiah speaks of, which, in the time of the Croisades, was not attempted to be stopped up. What the cause of that was, we are not told; but it seems that the waters of some springs without the city were conveyed into Jerusalem at the time; and that Solomon in his reign had attempted to do the like, and effected it, as to part of the water of the springs of Bethlehem. It was no wonder then that Hezekiah should think of introducing the waters of Siloam in like manner into the city, in order at once to deprive the besiegers of its waters, and to benefit the inhabitants of Jerusalem by them. Probably it was done in the same manner that Solomon brought the waters of Bethlehem thither; that is, by collecting the water of the spring, or springs, into a subterraneous reservoir, and from thence, by a concealed aqueduct, conveying them into Jerusalem; with this difference, that Solomon took only part of the Bethlehem water, leaving the rest to flow into those celebrated pools, which remain to this day; whereas Hezekiah turned all the water of Siloam into the city, absolutely stopping up the outlet into the pool, and filling it up with earth, that no trace of it might be seen by the Assyrians. Which seems indeed to be the account of the sacred writer, ver. 30, 'This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper water-course of Gihon,' (which is another name for Siloam) 'and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David.' Thus our translators express it: but the original may as well be rendered, 'Hezekiah stopped the upper going-out, נצמ, of the waters of Gihon, and directed them underneath, תחת, to the west of the city of David;' and so Pagninus and Arias Montanus understand the passage. 'He stopped up,' that is, the outlet of the waters of Gihon into the open air, by which they used to flow into the pool of Siloam, and became a brook; and by some subterraneous contrivance, he directed the waters to the west side of Jerusalem.—*Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 403—408.

4. *The kings of Assyria.*]—The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, 'king,' in the singular number.

5. *Up to the towers.*]—‘And erected towers above.’—*Hou-
bigant.*

24. *And prayed unto the Lord.*]—The manner in which we address ourselves to Almighty God, and the thoughts and words which we then use to express our gratitude, or dependence, are called prayer; for prayer, considered in its largest sense, seems to comprehend in it; 1. Supplication; 2. Praise; and 3. Thanksgiving.

The difference between praise and thanksgiving is, that the latter is an acknowledgment of the mercies which we have received; whilst praise is not confined to this, but may be a commemoration of any of the divine perfections; as of God’s power, or wisdom, or justice. (See Dr. Scott’s and Bp. Atterbury’s note on Psalm l. 14.)

Prayer, or supplication, is a duty of natural religion; and the observance of it is, without question, as old as mankind. It is manifest, first, that we are not the authors of our own being; and that we and all things about us proceed from God, and depend upon him: secondly, that God is good, and the bestower of all the good which we enjoy: thirdly, that we are exposed to many evils and dangers; and that our wants daily return upon us: lastly, that in many things we offend frequently; and that our obedience at the best is very defective. From which obvious reflections appear the necessity and reasonableness of prayer; and the encouragement which we have to address ourselves to our Maker. At the same time, it appears that the Scriptures very justly require of us a careful and constant performance of this duty; and that we ought willingly to comply with a command so easy, so favorable indeed, and so advantageous to us.

God is neither ignorant of our wants until we have informed him of them, nor has he any passions that he should be moved by entreaties; but he has appointed prayer as a method by which we may obtain his favor, and bring down his blessing upon us, because it is fit in itself that we should remember our Creator and Benefactor; because prayer to him reminds us of our dependence upon him; and when duly performed, is a proof of a religious disposition; and because it may probably preserve us from many offences: for if we consider with common and tolerable attention what we are doing, we shall dread to appear before him with settled resolutions of disobeying him, or to ask him that he would deliver us from those sins, which we have no inclination to forsake; which *he* hates and *we* still love; or to desire his favor and protection, while we take all methods not to deserve it; or to beg that he would

sanctify us, and bring us to a happy immortality, whilst the vanities and the cares of this world employ all our thoughts and wishes.—*Dr. Jortin.*

27. *Pleasant jewels.*—*Dr. Geddes* reads, ‘all sorts of curious weapons.’ The Septuagint, the Vulgate, and Syriac versions, have ‘vessels.’

29. *He provided him cities.*—*Dr. Geddes* suspects that a letter has been dropped out of the original word, and that instead of ‘cities,’ we should here read ‘droves of cattle.’ The Syriac version has ‘pastures,’ or ‘enclosures for cattle;’ and the Arabic ‘stabula,’ i. e. stables, shelters, or stalls; which may have been within the precincts of the respective cities, and therefore reconcileable enough with the text as it stands.

CHAP. XXXIII. VER. 11. *Among the thorns.*—It is difficult to say what this can mean. The Hebrew בְּחִוּתִּים may signify, that they put on him some instruments, which confined his hands, or feet. Probably the former expression relates to ‘manacles,’ and the latter to ‘fetters.’ The Syriac and Arabic versions read, ‘who took him alive.’ In the opinion of other commentators, the meaning is, that he was taken ‘in a thicket of briars,’ where he had concealed himself. See *Bp. Patrick.*

12. *And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God.*—It is remarkable that the books of Kings do not record the repentance of Manasseh. Perhaps the design of that history being to shew the wickedness of the nation, which brought destruction upon them, this repentance of Manasseh, which was only personal, and its benefits not being national, is there overlooked. However, we may draw this inference from the fact, as it is here told, viz. that affliction brings us to seek the Lord our God, and to humble ourselves before him; on the contrary, nothing is so likely to make us forget God as uninterrupted prosperity.

CHAP. XXXIV. VER. 6, 7. *Dr. Geddes’s* translation of these verses is, ‘And in all the desolated cities around, of Manasseh and Ephraim, and Simeon, and even of Naphtali, he demolished the altars and groves, stamped to dust the carved idols, and cut in pieces all the solar statues throughout the whole land of Israel, and then returned to Jerusalem.’ The Doctor subjoins the following note. ‘There are here two readings in the text; or rather the same letters written in one word, or divided into two. They have much puzzled interpreters; and by some are supposed to be corrupted. I am of a different opinion; and, adopting that reading which makes but one word, I believe I have given the true meaning. The

cities of Israel might well be called 'desolate cities;' since their principal inhabitants had been carried away captives in the reign of Hoshea.'

14. *Found a book of the law of the Lord given by Moses.*—In the Hebrew it is, 'a book of the law of the Lord, by the hand of Moses;' i. e. as Dr. Kennicott understands it, 'in the hand-writing of Moses:' for, says he, though there are fifteen places in the Old Testament, which mention the words 'law of Moses,' and 'book of Moses,' yet this one place only mentions 'the book of the law, in the hand, or by the hand, of Moses:' the reason of which seems to be, that the other places speak of that law 'in general;' but this speaks of one particular manuscript, namely, 'the original;' and, as to the point of age, it might be 'the original;' for, from the death of Moses to the death of Josiah, at the utmost computation, was not more than nine hundred and fifty years; an age exceeded by that of several manuscripts preserved at this day.—See his *Dissert.* vol. ii. p. 300.

22. *In the college.*—It is difficult to say what is the precise meaning of the Hebrew word מִשְׁנָה. The Septuagint makes no attempt to translate it, but reads εν μαρτυρια. Some render it, 'in the suburbs.' Probably she resided within the precincts of the temple; or מִשְׁנָה 'Misnah,' might have been the name of a street.

30. *He read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant.*—It can hardly be supposed, that both Josiah and all the men of Judah were entirely ignorant of what the book of the law contained; especially when it is remembered, that Jeremiah and other prophets were now living, who must have been very conversant in this book, and who made it their business to instruct the people in the precepts which it contained. But it is evident, that they did not give proper attention to the words of it; particularly to that passage in Deut. xxviii. 36, where Moses foretold the captivity of Samaria, and afterwards of Judah.—Bp. Patrick.

CHAP. XXXV. VER. 22. *Disguised himself, &c.*—Houbigant, agreeably to the ancient versions, reads, 'But encouraged himself;' and Dr. Geddes has, 'He was desirous of fighting with him.'

25. *Behold, they are written in the lamentations.*—It appears from this, that the Jews used to make lamentations, or mournful songs, on the death of great men, and had collections of this kind of composition. The author of the book of Samuel has preserved those that were made on the death of Saul and Jonathan, of Abner, and Absalom: but the mourn-

ful Elegy, which the disconsolate prophet composed on the immature death of good Josiah, has not been preserved. The loss of it is the more to be deplored, as, in all probability, it was a master-piece in its kind; for there never was an author more affected with his subject, nor more capable of filling it with the tenderest sentiments of sorrow and compassion.—See *Calmet*.

CHAP. XXXVI. VER. 9. *Jehoiachin was eight years old.*]

—The Syriac and Arabic versions read, ‘eighteen years.’ And Scaliger observes, this was the genuine reading. The variation in the Hebrew text might have been owing to a mistake in transcribing the numeral letters, or rather in reducing them into words. See note on Num. i. 46.—*Dr. Kennicott*.

20. *The kingdom of Persia.*—Houbigant reads, ‘Until the reign of the king of Persia;’ and Dr. Geddes, ‘Until the commencement of the Persian empire.’

21. *As long as she lay desolate she kept sabbath.*—God had commanded them to let their land rest every seventh year; and, because the Jews had violated this, as well as other precepts, God gave their land a long sabbath, or rest, for no less than ten times seven years, which Jeremiah had threatened.

If it be true, that they had neglected this law for the space of four hundred and ninety years, having ploughed their ground in the seventh, as well as in the other years, then the judgment of God was very remarkable, in causing their ground to rest, and to continue without tillage, just as long as it would, if they had observed this law. For in those four hundred and ninety years, says Procopius Gazæus, when they were under the government of kings, there were seventy years to be kept as sabbaths, which, that the land might enjoy its sabbath, were spent in the captivity of Babylon. Their punishment too was made the more remarkable in this particular, if it be true, as some have observed, that both the kingdom of Samaria, and the kingdom of Judah, were destroyed in a sabbatical year. According to Scaliger’s computation, the city and temple were destroyed also by Titus, immediately after a jubilee.—See *Bp. Patrick*, and *Calmet*.

22, 23. *Now, in the first year of Cyrus, &c.*—These two verses are at the beginning of Ezra: so that the Second Book of Chronicles should, probably, have concluded with the twenty-first verse of this chapter.

E Z R A.

INTRODUCTION.

WE are now arrived at a very interesting period of the Sacred History, when, according to the decree of Providence, announced by the Jewish prophets, the Israelites were to be delivered from their long captivity, and restored to the land of their fathers. Jeremiah, in particular, had predicted that their exile should continue, and their country lie desolate, for seventy years (ch. xxix. 10.); and Isaiah had declared, that at length their deliverance should be accomplished, after the destruction of the powerful empire of Babylon, by the Medes and Persians (ch. xlv. 28. xlv. 1—4.). What is very remarkable, the person and name of Cyrus, though a heathen prince, and an idolater, are expressly mentioned as the instrument of this great work, nearly two hundred years before the event happened. Immediately, therefore, on his accession to the throne of his father Cambyzes, this powerful sovereign issued a proclamation, permitting the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and affording them the most liberal assistance to enable them to rebuild the temple.

The history of this expedition, and the various impediments which interrupted the building, together with the abuses that were corrected, and the reformatations that were produced, form the interesting subjects of the following Book.

The distinguished piety of Ezra, his zeal, knowledge, and discretion in conducting this arduous undertaking, claim our

utmost admiration. Descended from Seraiah, in a direct line from Aaron, he seems to have united all the requisites of a profound statesman with the functions of the sacerdotal character. He appears to have made the Holy Scriptures, during the captivity, his peculiar study; and, assisted by Nehemiah, perhaps, and the great synagogue, he is said to have furnished complete copies of the sacred books, and to have settled the canon of scripture for his time. For this purpose, he doubtless was furnished with the Hebrew originals; which, notwithstanding the Apocryphal statement, 2 Esdras xiv. 21, and the incautious assertions of some credulous fathers of the church founded on it, we may well believe, were deposited with the sacred vessels and treasures belonging to the Jews, in the temple of Babylon.

Ezra is said to have lived to the age of one hundred and twenty years, the precise age of Moses (Deut. xxxiv. 7.); and his memory is held in almost equal reverence, by his grateful countrymen, with that of their great legislator and prophet. Indeed, he rendered them the most lasting and essential services: for, beside conducting them back to their beloved country, and superintending the building of their temple, 1. He corrected, says Calmet, the errors which had crept into the sacred writings, from the negligence, or misapprehension, of the transcribers. 2. He carefully collected all the books of which the Holy Scripture then consisted. 3. He occasionally added what appeared to him necessary for the purpose of illustrating, connecting, or completing them. 4. He changed the former names of some places, which were in his time become obsolete, and substituted the modern; and, 5. He is said to have transcribed the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures in the Chaldee character, to render them more intelligible to the people at large. See, also, *Prideaux*, Part i. Book v.

Those parts of the Book of Ezra which consist chiefly of letters, decrees, &c. are written in Chaldee, because it seemed

more suitable to the fidelity of a sacred historian to give those official documents, as they may be called, in the original language, rather than subject them to such variations as the most careful translation must necessarily induce.

CHAPTER I.

VER. 1. *Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia.]—*This is that celebrated monarch, whom Isaiah mentioned by name, a hundred and forty years before the temple was destroyed, and two hundred years before Cyrus was born, as designed by God for restoring his people. (Isaiah xlv. 28, and xlv. 1.) This wonderful prophecy, it is probable, was uttered at a time when the Babylonians, who carried away the Jews into captivity, were themselves subject to the Assyrians; and it was now fulfilled seventy years after that melancholy event took place, which was in the reign of Jehoiachin.

*1. That the word of the Lord, &c.]—*Jeremiah had foretold, that after seventy years were accomplished, the king of Babylon should be punished; that the land of the Chaldeans should be reduced to perpetual desolation, chap. xxv. 12; and that the people of Judah should return to their own country, chap. xxix. 10.

*1. The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus.]—*It is highly probable, that this decree in favor of the Jews was, in a great measure, owing to the good offices of Daniel. Cyrus, at his first coming to Babylon, found him there, celebrated for his wisdom over all the east, and, in many things, for a knowledge superior to the rest of mankind. It is probable, also, that Daniel shewed the king those passages in Isaiah, written many years before he was born, which mention him by name, as a great prince, a conqueror, and the restorer of his people, by causing the temple to be built, and the city of Jerusalem to be inhabited again: for it is evident from the decree itself, that Cyrus had seen those prophecies; and surely no person was more proper to point them out to him, and to recommend the accomplishment of them to his princely care, than Daniel, who was in such high credit with him, and who was so passionately concerned for the restoration of Sion.—*Prideaux's Connect.*

There were four decrees given by the kings of Persia in favor of the Jews. The first, in the year before Christ 536, chap. i. 1. The second, mentioned ch. vi. 8. The third by Artaxerxes, in the seventh year of his reign, Ezra vii. 11. The fourth, by the

same Artaxerxes to Nehemiah, chap. ii. in the twentieth year of his reign. It is from the third decree, (i. e. from the seventh of Artaxerxes) that Daniel's four hundred and ninety weeks are to begin.—*Ibid.*

2. *The Lord God of heaven.*—It has been observed by the learned Joseph Mede and others, that, before the captivity, God is frequently called in the Holy Scriptures, 'the Lord of hosts;' but after that calamitous event, he is constantly styled 'the God of heaven.' Other changes in language, manners, and opinions, will from this period be perceived by the attentive reader.

7. *Put them in the house of his gods.*—This accounts for the preservation of these sacred vessels. Though of immense value, they had never been converted to any private use; but were repositied, as sacred treasures, in the temple of Nebuchadnezzar's gods.

8. *Sheshbazzar, the prince of Judah.*—His name was originally Zerubbabel. It was common for the great men of Judea to have two names; one of their own country, and another of the Chaldeans. Zerubbabel was born in Babylon, and his name, which signifies 'an exile or stranger in Babylon,' implies the misery of the people of Israel at that time; but Sheshbazzar, which means 'fine linen and gold,' or, according to Dr. Trapp, 'joy in tribulation,' is evidently a name of better omen, and denotes their future flourishing condition.

10. *Four hundred and ten.*—From the parallel account in Esdras, chap. ii. 13, and the authority of several manuscripts, it is evident, that the number of these vessels should have been 'two thousand four hundred and ten.'—*Dr. Kennicott.*

CHAP. II. VER. 1. *These are the children of the province, &c.*—By 'the province,' Dr. Kennicott and others think that Judea is meant; and they refer for authority to 1 Esdras, v. 7, where it is said, 'These are they of Jewry that came up from the captivity, where they dwelled as strangers,' &c.

Houbigant, however, is of a different opinion. The persons here spoken of, he observes, are those whom Nebuchadnezzar had carried away captive to Babylon; and not the ten tribes, who had been dispersed before by the kings of Assyria into various provinces, and who afterwards returned to Jerusalem in separate companies. Zerubbabel was in the province of Babylon, and to him those captives joined themselves, who lived nearest in the same province. This is the reason why those of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin returned first, though a liberty of returning was granted to all. Another reason is, be-

cause the rebuilding of the temple principally concerned them, as Jerusalem was within their dominion.

2. *Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, &c.*]—For the variation in the names of the chieftains, elders, and others, and for the difference with respect to the numbers mentioned in this chapter, and in the parallel places, Nehemiah vii, and 1 Esdras v, the reader is referred to the learned and elaborate Dissertation of Dr. Kennicott, vol. ii. p. 508, where he will find the different texts compared, and the subject fully and minutely stated.

63. *And the tirshatha said.*]—Cappellus and other commentators are of opinion, that Zerubbabel is here meant by ‘tirshatha,’ which is a name descriptive of his office as chief governor, or king’s commissioner. Nehemiah is called by this appellation, Neh. viii. 9, and x. 1; but as it appears from Neh. i. 11, and ii. 1, that Nehemiah was the king’s cup-bearer, Calmet and others are of opinion, that this is the specific office, which the word ‘tirshatha’ is meant to describe. The ancient versions do not attempt to translate it. See the Marginal Reading.

64. *Forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore.*]—On adding up the several sums particularised in this chapter, they will be found to amount to no more than ‘twenty-nine thousand eight hundred and eighteen.’ But it is reasonable to suppose, that great numbers of the other tribes, beside those of Benjamin and Judah, were incorporated with them, and availed themselves of the privilege that was now offered of returning to their own country. This seems to be intimated by the addition, chap. i. 5, where the writer, having mentioned the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, adds, ‘With all them whose spirit God had raised, to go up to build the house of the Lord.’

69. *Threescore and one thousand drams of gold.*]—These drams being mentioned, together with five thousand pounds of silver, in our version, seem to convey the idea of weight; whereas, in fact, these ‘daraconim,’ ‘drams,’ were a Median coin, struck by one of the elder Dariuses, and named after him Darics. The scholiast upon Aristophanes says, (in *Ecclesias*.) ‘The Stateras of gold, are the Darics; so called, not from Darius the father of Xerxes, but from a more ancient king.’ This agrees with the account given, 1 Chron. xxix. 7, ‘The princes of Israel gave—of gold ten thousand drams.’ These then, it is probable, were golden Darics, obtained from Persia by commerce; a pretty strong hint, from what part of the world gold was procured in the days of David.

The word rendered 'pound of silver' is mina: worth sixty shekels, Ezek. xlv. 12; or about seven pounds of our money.—*Expos. Index.*

CHAP. IV. VER. 1. *The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin.]*—These were the Samaritans; who were not considered as the genuine offspring of the Israelites, but the descendants of that mixed multitude, whom Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, sent from Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, Sepharvaim, and other provinces, to take possession of those parts of the country, from which he had carried away the ten tribes of Israel as captives. See Prolegom. No. vii.

4. *Weakened the hands.]*—That is, they impeded and discouraged them. See Nehemiah vi. 9.

5. *Until the reign of Darius.]*—The most probable opinion is, that the Darius here meant was Darius Hystaspes, whose second year was the eighteenth after the first of Cyrus, according to the computation of Bp. Hunt. It is evident, that Ahasuerus, mentioned in the sixth verse, was Cambyses; and that Artaxerxes, mentioned in the seventh, was the false Smerdis; because they were kings of Persia, who reigned between the time of Cyrus and the time of that Darius, by whose decree the temple was finished. But, as that Darius was the son of Hystaspes, between whom and Cyrus there reigned none in Persia, except Cambyses and Smerdis, it must follow, that none but these could be the Ahasuerus and Artaxerxes, who are said in this chapter to have put a stop to the work.—See *Prideaux*, An. 522.

Houbigant renders this verse thus: 'And, because they had determined that they would prevent their undertaking, they hindered them all the days of Cyrus,' &c.

7. *The writing of the letter was, &c.]*—That is, as some expositors understand, both the letter, and a full exposition of it, were written in that language. Others think, more probably, that the letter was written both in the Syriac characters, and in the Syriac language. It was not uncommon, in ancient times, for different languages to be written in the same character, though each had a distinct alphabet. The Hebrew is still written in the Chaldee character; and most of the modern languages, it is well known, are now written in the Roman character.

8. From this verse to the 27th of the seventh chapter, the original is in Chaldee, not Hebrew.

11. *The river.]*—That is, the river Euphrates.

11. *At such a time.]*—Houbigant, on the authority of the Vulgate, would read, 'dicunt salutem,' i. e. 'send health,' or 'greeting.' So also ver. 11, and 17. The Septuagint, Syriac, and

Arabic versions omit these words. Others consider them as equivalent to the common expression, 'to wit,' or 'be it known.' It is not improbable, that after these words, there was some numeral mark denoting the date of the letter.

14. *Have maintenance from the king's palace.*—The margin reads, 'are salted with the salt of the palace.' Some have supposed that these words refer to their receiving a stipend from the king in salt; others, that it expresses an acknowledgment, that they were protected by the king, as flesh is preserved by salt. It is sufficient, however, for putting an end to all these conjectures, to recite the words of a modern Persian monarch, whose court Sir J. Chardin attended some time. Rising in wrath against an officer who had attempted to deceive him, he drew his sabre, fell upon him, and hewed him in pieces at the feet of the grand vizir, who was standing, (and whose favor the poor wretch courted by this deception;) and looking fixedly upon him; and, to the other great lords that stood on each side of him, he said, with a tone of indignation, I have then such ungrateful servants and traitors as these 'to eat my salt.' (Tom. iii. p. 149.) I am well informed, says Mr. Parkhurst, (Heb. Lex. p. 448, third edition) that it is a common expression of the natives in the East Indies, 'I eat such an one's salt,' meaning, I am fed by him. Salt, among the eastern natives, formerly was, as it still is, a symbol of hospitality and friendship. The learned Jos. Mede observes, (Works, p. 370, fol.) that in his time, when the Emperor of Russia would shew extraordinary favor to any one, he sent him bread and *salt* from his table. And when he invited Baron Sigismund, the emperor Ferdinand's ambassador, he did it in this form, 'Sigismund, you shall eat your bread and salt with us.' So Tamerlane, in his Institutes, mentioning one Share Behraum, who had quitted his service, joined the enemy, and fought against him, says, 'At length my *salt* which he had eaten, overwhelmed him with remorse; he again threw himself on my mercy, and humbled himself before me.'—See *Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 229.

CHAP. V. VER. 1. *The son of Iddo.*—A lineal descendant of any one in Scripture is often called 'his son,' though many degrees removed. Zechariah was not the son of Iddo, but of Berachiah. See note on 1 Chron. i. 17.

4. *Said we.*—The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, more consistently read, 'they said.' See ver. 10.

5. *The eye of their God.*—That is, the peculiar favor and protection of God.

CHAP. VI. VER. 2. *There was found at Achmetha, &c.*—This city was afterwards called Ecbatana, where the kings of

Persia kept their court. It is plain from hence, that Darius was a prince of great goodness; for though, at first, he searched the records of Babylon in vain, he did not decree any thing against the Jews; but ordered a further search to be made at Achmetha, where the roll, containing the decree of Cyrus in their favor, was at length found.—*Bp. Patrick.*

17. *According to the number of the tribes of Israel.*—Though the ten tribes are said to have been carried away captive by Shalmaneser, yet many of them were permitted to remain in their own country; and as some of the captives returned with Judah and Benjamin, they considered themselves as representing the whole of the Jewish nation; otherwise, we may suppose, they would not have offered twelve he-goats according to the number of the tribes of Israel.

CHAP. VII. VER. 6. *A ready scribe.*—The Septuagint, Vulgate, and our Translation, render the original words ‘a ready scribe;’ as if to possess the talent of writing expeditiously were any great perfection, or that an aged man, as Ezra was, should be renowned for it. It was not then for writing, but for expounding the Holy Scriptures, that Ezra was so famous; for סופר denotes one skilled and learned, from ספר, a book; (see verse 10) and as no book was comparable to the book of the law, סופר became a name of great dignity, and signified one who taught the law of God, and instructed the people out of it. In which sense we find the word γραμματεῖς, or scribes, used in the New Testament; for when our Saviour is said to have ‘taught the people as one having authority, and not as the scribes,’ this plainly shews, that these scribes were not transcribers, but teachers and expounders of the law, though they did not do it with proper authority. It is probable, that some extraordinary means were used to obtain so great a favor from Artaxerxes, as this was the commission on which Ezra went; and therefore we may suppose, that it was granted at the solicitation of Esther; for this Artaxerxes was the Ahasuerus of Esther. Though not yet advanced to the dignity of queen, she was become the best-beloved of the king’s concubines; and as it was usual for the kings of Persia, on particular days and occasions, to allow their women to ask what favors they pleased, it is not unlikely that Esther, by the direction of Mordecai, on some such occasion as this, though she had not discovered her kingdom and nation, might make this the subject of her petition.—See *Prid. An.* 459. *Bp. Patrick, Calmet, and Le Clerc.*

9. *According to the good hand of his God upon him.*—An Hebraism, or rather a Chaldaism, denoting the especial guidance, protection, and good providence of God.

CHAP. VIII. VER. 15. *I gathered them together to the river that runneth to Ahava.*—This was a river of Assyria. It was common for those who travelled from Babylon to Jerusalem, to direct their course, in order to avoid the scorching heat in the deserts of Arabia, at first, northward; and then, turning westward, to pass through Syria into Palestine; but as Ezra intended to assemble as many Israelites as possible, and to conduct them to Jerusalem, he passed through this country, and halted in that of Ava, or Ahava, from whence he might send messengers to the Caspian mountains, in order to induce such Jews as resided there to join their brethren, who were now on their journey to the land of their fathers.—*Le Clerc* and *Calmet*.

27. *Precious as gold.*—Our margin has, ‘yellow, or shining brass.’ Sir J. Chardin, in a MS. note, has mentioned a mixed metal used in the East, and highly esteemed there, which might probably be of an origin as ancient as the time of Ezra. He says, ‘I have heard some Dutch gentlemen speak of a metal in the island of Sumatra, and among the Macassars, much more esteemed than gold, which royal personages alone are privileged to wear. It is a mixture, if I remember right, of gold and steel, or of copper and steel.’ He afterwards added, ‘calmbac is the name of this metal, which is composed of gold and copper. In color it nearly resembles the pale carnation rose; it has a very fine grain, and the polish is extremely lively. Gold is not of so lively and brilliant a color. Some doubt seems to have been entertained as to the composition of this metal; but none as to its beauty and value.’—See *Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 419.

CHAP. IX. VER. 3. *Astonied.*—That is, stunned, speechless, and stupified with grief.

8. *To give us a nail.*—An allusion to the large pins, or nails, that were used to fasten down the tents. As a pin of this sort was the instrument of firmness and stability, it is here metaphorically taken for a fixed residence; the cause for the effect.

9. *To give us a wall in Judah and in Jerusalem.*—The Hebrew word signifies also ‘a hedge,’ or ‘fence,’ such as were usually made for sheep-folds. Ezra uses this expression to denote the singular care of God, who, being the ‘Shepherd of Israel,’ had gathered together his scattered flock, and brought them back into their ancient folds; in which he preserved them, even when they had no wall for their defence, under the powerful protection of the king of Persia.—*Bp. Patrick*.

CHAP. X. VER. 1. *Now when Ezra had prayed, &c.*—As this prayer was made at the evening sacrifice, when the greater

part of the people were assembled to worship the Lord, and as it was uttered with great passion, and contained, we may suppose, the highest expressions of grief and sorrow, it is no wonder that the people were moved; especially on seeing such a person as Ezra, a priest of God, and a great ruler under the king of Persia, so dejected, so full of fear, confusion, and astonishment.—*Bp. Patrick.*

9. *It was the ninth month, &c.]*—That is, some time in December, when the rains in the Holy Land are extremely cold. Dr. Russell, in his account of the weather at Aleppo, which very much resembles that in Judea, says, that the natives reckon the severity of the winter to last but forty days, beginning from the twelfth of December, and ending with the twentieth of January, and that this computation comes in fact near the truth; that the air during this time is excessively piercing, even to those who are but just come from a cold climate, &c. and it certainly must be much more so, when the season proves wet, as was the case at present.—*Harmer*, vol. i. p. 49.

‘The street of the house of God,’ in this verse, is rendered by Houbigant, more properly, ‘the court;’ for it means that court, where the people stood when they worshipped.

NEHEMIAH.

INTRODUCTION.

It appears that Nehemiah, the author of the book in the sacred canon which bears his name, was the son of Hachaliah, and that he was born at Babylon during the captivity. Some think that he was descended from Aaron; others, that he was of the tribe of Judah, and related to the royal family of David. [See note on ch. i. 1.] The circumstance of his advancement to the dignified office of cup-bearer to the Persian monarch, shews that he was a man of illustrious rank; or that he attained to his high office by fortunate occurrences and uncommon merit. Though he had never seen the country of his fathers, he cherished the most zealous affection for it; and hearing from some Jews, who had lately left Jerusalem, of the desolate state in which their holy city continued, he conceived the noble and patriotic design of restoring it from its ruins. With this view, having performed the pious duties of fasting and prayer, and ‘humbled himself before the Lord,’ he ventured to request permission of his sovereign to rebuild Jerusalem. See chap. ii. 3—8. We may form some idea of his joy, on finding that his request was granted, and that his royal master was also willing to assist him in his laudable design. The present book gives a faithful narrative of the beginning, progress, and accomplishment of this great undertaking, and of Nehemiah’s final return to Shushan, or Babylon, agreeably to his engagement, after an absence of about twelve

years. The opposition of Sanballat and the Samaritans, the firmness and zeal with which their insults and ineffectual efforts were repelled, cannot be read without the liveliest interest, and will afford, to the latest times, a noble and animating example of distinguished patriotism, united with the sincerest devotion to the interests of religion. Chap. iv. 13—23.

The piety and virtue of this great and good man will appear with equal lustre in the numerous and important re-formations which he introduced. He relieved the people from their hardships and oppressions, by abolishing the harsh and usurious exactions of the nobles and the rulers. He gave up his own revenue, as governor of the province, for the benefit of the people; and, as a further means of conciliating their affections, he shewed an example of the most princely hospitality. Chap. v. 14—18. As the best security for good morals, and a better observance of the laws of God, he re-established the offices of public worship, and prevented the profanation of the sabbath, which had been so shameful, as to admit of all kinds of labor and traffic on that hallowed day. He rendered a further important service to his brethren, by furnishing the captives who returned with authentic registers, and enabling them, in the best manner possible, after so long and calamitous an interval, to trace the genealogies of their respective families. But the most difficult task which he had to perform, but which, however, he was enabled to accomplish, was to separate the Jewish people from the mixed multitude, with which they were now incorporated, and to annul the numerous marriages, which they appear to have made with heathens and idolaters of almost every description.

The Book of Nehemiah immediately following that of Ezra in the Hebrew Bible, he has been considered by St. Jerome, and others, as the author of it. It is indeed called, both in the Latin Vulgate and in the Greek Septuagint, the Second

Book of Ezra: but there can be no reasonable doubt that Nehemiah was its real author, for he professes to be so in the beginning; and, except in those parts which seem to have been subsequently added, (see chap. xii.) he always speaks of himself in the first person. A very strong, presumptive proof that Ezra was not the author of this book is, that several names of persons and places are by Nehemiah written differently. See marginal readings on ch. vii. 43—61.

Nehemiah appears to have co-operated with Ezra in all his pious undertakings, and probably assisted him in forming the canon of Scripture.

CHAPTER I.

VER. 1. *Nehemiah.*]—It may be well questioned whether this Nehemiah be the same person that is mentioned Ezra ii. 2, and chap. vii. 7, of this book, as one that returned from the Babylonish captivity under Zerubbabel; since, from the first year of Cyrus, to the twentieth of Artaxerxes Longimanus, there must have been an interval, at least, of ninety-two years: so that Nehemiah, at this time, must have been a very old man; on the lowest computation above an hundred, and consequently incapable of being the king's cup-bearer, of taking a journey from Shushan to Jerusalem, and of acting there with such energy and courage as distinguished the whole of his government. Upon this presumption, therefore, we may conclude, that this was a different person, though of the same name. Tirshatha denoted the title of his office; and, both in the Persic and Chaldee, it was the general name given to all the king's deputies and governors. See Ezra ii. 63. The text calls him barely 'the son of Hachaliah,' without informing us of what tribe he was. Some, therefore, from 2 Maccabees i. 18, 21, where he is said to have offered sacrifices, and from his being reckoned at the head of the priests, who signed the new covenant with God, (Neh. x. 1.) have affirmed, that he must have been of the family of Aaron; but as there is nothing conclusive in all this, and it seems expressly contradicted by his saying in another place, that he was not a fit person to shelter himself in the temple, (chap. vi. 11),

commentators, in general, suppose him to have been of the royal family of Judah. This is the more probable, because we find none but such promoted to those high stations about the king's person; and we never read of a priest that was so, till a long time after, and that was on a very different account.

The 'month Chisleu' answers to part of our November and December, and 'the twentieth year' is the twentieth year of the reign of Artaxerxes Longimanus.—See *Le Clerc*, and *Houbigant*.

11. *I was the king's cup-bearer.*—The office of cup-bearer was considered both lucrative and honorable in the Persian court, because those who filled it enjoyed the privilege of being daily about the king's person, and consequently had an opportunity of presenting any petition they might think proper to make. That it was a post of great profit appears from the single instance of Nehemiah, who had amassed so much wealth, that he was enabled to support all the expenses of his government out of his own private fortune, without imposing any burden on the people.

CHAP. II. VER. 6. *And I set him a time.*—How long this was, is not certain. It is said, indeed, that he was governor of the land of Judah for twelve years, chap. v. 14, xiii. 6. But, considering what haste he made for dispatching the building of the walls, which he finished in fifty-two days, the leave which he asked might be but for a year, or, perhaps, half so long; after which time it is likely that he returned to Shushan, according to his promise; but some time after he might have been sent back again by the king (who found his presence there serviceable, or perhaps necessary for the better regulation of that province) to be his governor for twelve years.—*Dr. Dodd.*

8. *The house.*—Meaning 'the temple,' or 'house of the Lord.'

13. *Dragon-well.*—In all the ancient versions, this well, or fountain, has a different name. Some commentators imagine that it was called the 'dragon-well,' from the ornamental stone which inclosed its mouth, and which might have been in the form of a serpent, or dragon; others think that it derived its name from the sinuous, or serpent-like manner, in which the water glided through the valley. The Septuagint calls it the 'fountain, or well of figs;' the Syriac, 'of the hills;' and the Arabic reads, 'I came to the gate of the torrent.' It is extremely probable, therefore, that this same well had different names at different times.

20. *Nor memorial in Jerusalem.*—This alludes, perhaps, to

the impossibility of tracing their genealogy, or of ascertaining the tribes to which they belonged.

CHAP. III. VER. 1. *The tower of Meah.*]—Pellicanus is of opinion, that Meah is not the name of a tower; but, as the word in Hebrew signifies ‘an hundred,’ the sense is, that they not only rebuilt the sheep-gate, but also an hundred cubits of the wall, which extended as far as the tower of Hananeel. The Vulgate, Septuagint, and Syriac versions, confirm this interpretation. The sheep-gate was on the south side of the city, in that part of the valley which looked towards mount Sion. It was so called, because the sheep intended for sacrifice passed through this gate to the temple. See ver. 13.

26. *Moreover, the Nethinims.*]—Not only the priests and Levites, but the meanest persons that belonged to the house of God, contributed to the work. The names of those who repaired the walls of Jerusalem are commemorated, because it was an undertaking of virtue and piety to restore the holy city. It was an instance of religion and courage, to defend the true worshippers of God, that they might serve him in quietness and safety; and, in the midst of so many enemies, to go on with this work in a pious confidence of the power of God to support them.—*Bp. Patrick.*

CHAP. IV. VER. 12. *Ten times.*]—That is, ‘often, repeatedly.’

23. *None of us put off our clothes.*]—Our margin reads, ‘every one went with his weapon for water,’ which appears to be the right translation. The circumstance, that no one put off his clothes, except for washing, gives rather too favorable an idea of the state of the Jews at this period; or, at least, it may seem too trifling to be enumerated among their distresses and anxieties on the present occasion; but, to say, that beside other watchings and labors, they could not procure water from the wells, without going out armed, appears not only to add greatly to their fatigues; but also to express very strikingly the calamitous state of the country, and the ill-will of their neighbours around them. Consonant to this, is the description of Deborah, Judges v. 11: ‘Instead of the clamors of the archers, at the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord.’ How strongly is this description heightened by the contrast! while their contention at the wells shews their importance, and the strife consequent on the determination to possess them.—See *Fragments to Calmet*, No. lxx.

Grotius understands, that none of them put off their clothes, except for the purpose of those ablutions and purifications, which the laws of Moses required.

CHAP. V. VER. 1. *There was a great cry of the people against their brethren.*—The poor made grievous complaints against the rich, for taking advantage of their necessities, and exacting usury. This oppression reduced them so low, that they were obliged to mortgage their lands and houses, and even to sell their children, to enable them to buy bread for their support. What increased the cruelty of this exaction was, that it was made at a time, when their enemies threatened to destroy them all; so that they were obliged to purchase corn at the unreasonable rate demanded by their rich brethren, or to perish with hunger.

3. *Because of the dearth.*—Not long before, there had been a great scarcity, owing to want of rain. During this distress, the rich had obliged their brethren to part with all they had; and now another dearth, occasioned by the multitudes of people in the city, and their enemies hindering the country people from coming with provisions, rendered their condition truly deplorable.—*Bp. Patrick.*

4. *For the king's tribute, &c.*—Houbigant renders it, 'for the king's tribute on our lands and vineyards.'

11. *Also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them.*—The hundredth part was the rate of interest at that time exacted in those countries, as it was afterwards among the Romans. This was the hundredth part of what was lent every month, so that every year they paid the eighth part of the principal nearly. Salmasius, however, observes, that, in the eastern countries, there never was any law to determine what interest should be taken for money lent for a day, or a week, or a month, or a year, (for there were all these sorts of usury,) but every one was left to demand what he pleased; and, according to what was agreed, they paid for what was borrowed.—*Patrick, in loc.*

Nothing can be more destructive to Syria than the shameful and excessive usury, which is customary in that country. When the peasants are in want of money to purchase grain, cattle, &c. they can find none but by mortgaging the whole, or part of their future crop, greatly under its value. The danger of letting money appear, closes the hands of all by whom it is possessed; and if it be parted with, it must be from the hope of a rapid and exorbitant gain. The most moderate interest is twelve per cent. The usual rate is twenty; and it frequently rises as high even as thirty.—*Volney's Travels, vol. ii. p. 410.* See, also, Jer. xv. 10.

15. *And had taken of them bread and wine, &c.*—'And had

taken from each of them, for bread and wine, forty shekels of silver.'—*Houbigant*.

19. *Think upon me, my God, for good, &c.*—Nehemiah frequently calls upon God in this manner, rather in pious supplication, to be remembered on account of his good deeds, than from any arrogance of heart. To have concealed the acts of his government would have been inconsistent with the office of a faithful historian, and have deprived posterity of an excellent example. The sacred writers, conscious of their own dignity, are equally superior to vanity and disguise. They record their own virtues, and their own failings, with equal sincerity.—*Dr. Gray*, p. 220.

CHAP. VI. VER. 5. *An open letter.*—A letter has its Hebrew name from its being rolled, or folded together. The modern Arabs, after rolling up their letters, flatten them to the breadth of an inch, and, instead of sealing them, paste up the end of them. (*Niebuhr*, p. 90.) The Persians make up their letters in a roll about six inches long, and a bit of paper is fastened round it with gum, and sealed with an impression of ink, which resembles our printer's ink, but it is not so thick. (*Hanway's Travels*, vol. i. p. 317.) Letters were generally sent to persons of distinction in a bag, or purse, and to equals they were also inclosed; but to inferiors, or those who were held in contempt, they were sent open, i. e. uninclosed.

Lady M. W. Montague says, (*Letters*, vol. i. p. 136.) the bassa of Belgrade's answer to the English ambassador going to Constantinople was brought to him in a purse of scarlet satin. But, in the case of Nehemiah, an insult was designed to be offered to him by Sanballat, in refusing him the mark of respect usually paid to persons of his station, and treating him contemptuously, by sending the letter without the customary appendages, when presented to persons of consequence.

11. *Should such a man as I flee?*—Shall I, the chief governor, on whose presence, counsel, and conduct, the safety of the city and nation in a great measure depends; who have professed such confidence in God; who have had such eminent experience of his gracious aid, when the danger was much greater than now; shall I dishonor God and religion, and betray the city and people, by my cowardice?

CHAP. VII. VER. 2. *I gave my brother Hanani, and Haniah—charge over Jerusalem.*—Nehemiah probably was now returning to Shushan, to give the king an account of the state of affairs in Judea; and therefore he was particularly careful to place such men in the city, as he knew would execute the trust

reposed in them with the strictest fidelity. Hanani had given proof of his zeal for God and his country, in taking a journey from Judea to Shushan, to inform Nehemiah of the wretched state of Jerusalem, and to implore his assistance to relieve it. The reason why Nehemiah put such trust and confidence in Hananiah was, because he was a conscientious man, and acted on religious principles, which would render him proof against all temptations, which the enemy, during his absence, might throw in his way.—*Matt. Poole, and Bp. Patrick.*

8. *The children of Parosh, &c.*—This genealogy differs in some particulars from that given by Ezra, chap. ii; but it should be remembered, that Nehemiah's account of names and numbers was taken in Judea, after the walls of Jerusalem had been rebuilt, and that of Ezra, at Babylon, before the Jews returned to their own country.—See *Bp. Patrick, and Dr. Lightfoot.*

64. *Genealogy.*—Among the Chinese, there is a tablet of ancestry in every house; and references in conversation are often made to their actions. (*Lord Macartney's Embassy, p. 295.*) This practice seems to correspond with the genealogical tables of the Jews, which they are so careful in preserving.—*Burder's Orient. Cust.*

CHAP. VIII. VER. 8. *And gave the sense, &c.*—Some commentators are of opinion, that Ezra and his associates only expounded the law of Moses to their hearers; but Isaac Casaubon, Le Clerc, and others, are of opinion, that the law was read in the original Hebrew, and then translated, or explained to them in Chaldee. From their long captivity, the Jews in general must have lost their native tongue; and, in order that the common people might understand the Holy Scriptures, the Targums, or Chaldee paraphrases, became absolutely necessary. Casaubon observes, that the Jews still retain the custom, which Ezra first established, of reading in their synagogues some portion of the Holy Scriptures first in Hebrew, and then in Chaldee.

It is said, ver. 8, that Ezra read to 'all those that could understand.' Now there could not be any difficulty in understanding the law, provided they understood the language in which it was read to them: and it is certain, that after the return from Babylon, the popular language of the Jews was much changed, and more nearly resembled the Chaldee; at the same time, it was not in such a state as to induce the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, or Malachi, to write in it. But, in all similar cases of the corruption of languages, persons do not usually write in it till it has acquired a fixed and reputable character, in consequence of being spoken by persons of the middle and superior classes. The better-educated Jews, perhaps, were capable of

conversing, as well as of writing, in pure Hebrew; and they would either write in that, or in pure Chaldee. Thus, both these languages are found in great purity in the books of Daniel and of Ezra, and not the dialect spoken by the common people.

CHAP. IX. VER. 22. *And didst divide them into corners.*]—Many various interpretations of these words may be found in the commentators; but they probably allude to the division of the country, or the land of Canaan, according to the number of the tribes. These districts, it will be perceived on inspecting the map, run into many angles, or corners; and hence the propriety of the expression in the text. Coverdale and Cranmer read, ‘And partedst them according to their portions.’

22. *The land of Sihon, and the land of the king of Heshbon.*]—It should rather be, ‘The land of Sihon, or the land of the king of Heshbon;’ for Heshbon was the capital city of the kingdom of Sihon.—See *Dr. Wells*, vol. i. p. 284.

36. *Behold, we are servants this day, &c.*]—Though God had, in a wonderful manner, restored them to their own land, yet the marks of his displeasure for their sins were still visible: for they were only servants to others, not owners and proprietors of the lands, which God had given to their fathers.—*Bp. Patrick*.

37. *They have dominion over our bodies, &c.*]—Their bodies were liable to be pressed to serve in the king’s wars, or in his works; and their cattle to be seized for his use. Hence we may learn how ridiculously they boasted, John viii. 33, ‘That they were never in bondage to any man;’ whereas, they had formerly been long slaves in Egypt, very lately in Babylon, and even after they came from thence, were now subject to the dominion of their rulers, as they here complain. Nay, at the very time, when they made such foolish boasts before our Saviour, they were deprived of sovereign power, and paid tribute to the Romans.

38. *We make a sure covenant, and write it, &c.*]—Rather, ‘and subscribe, or sign it.’ Pellicanus observes, it was of very little consequence what such an untowardly people promised; for what regard could they have to their own hand-writing, who had none to the ten commandments, written on tables of stone by the hand of God? It was, however, very useful that there should be a public instrument to convince them of their impiety; that they might be publicly confounded, when they refused to obey the precepts of the law, by shewing them, under their own hands, their engagements to future fidelity.—*Bp. Patrick*.

CHAP. X. VER. 1. *Now those that sealed were, Nehemiah,*

&c.]—Nehemiah, as being governor under the king of Persia, and therefore the chief prince among them, sealed first.—*Bp. Patrick.*

29. *And entered into a curse.*]—That is, ‘they invoked the curses of the divine law upon themselves, in case of disobedience in future.’

30. *That we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, &c.*]—From this, and the three following verses, it is evident, that the principal articles, which they obliged themselves to observe, by this covenant, were, 1. Not to make intermarriages with the Gentiles. 2. To observe the sabbath and sabbatical years. 3. To pay their annual tribute for the reparation of the temple. 4. To pay their tithes and first-fruits for the maintenance of the priests and Levites. And hence we may infer, that these laws had been chiefly neglected since their return from the captivity.—*Prideaux.*

34. *The wood-offering.*]—Maimonides says, that there was a time fixed for families to go out into the forests, and bring in wood to be laid in order on the altar. The day when it came to the turn of a family to bring the wood, they offered up a free-will offering, and it was to them ‘a good day,’ or festival; on which they were forbidden to mourn, fast, or to do any work. See Calendar of the Jews, for the 21st Elul, p. 76 in Prolegom.

CHAP. XI. VER. 1. *The rulers of the people dwelled at Jerusalem.*]—The inhabitants of the neighbouring countries were so exasperated at seeing the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt, that many of the Jews were afraid to live there, thinking themselves much safer in the country. The rulers, therefore, set them the example, by settling themselves at Jerusalem, in order to encourage the people to do the same; for which purpose they cast lots, that among ten men it might be known whom God chose to come thither.—*Bp. Patrick.*

CHAP. XII. It is probable, that the greater part of the register contained in this chapter, from verse 1 to verse 26, was added by some subsequent author, or, perhaps, by the authority of the Great Synagogue; for it seems unconnected with the narrative of Nehemiah, and, if genuine, must ascribe to him a degree of longevity, which appears scarcely credible.—See *Prideaux*, Ann. 458, and *Dr. Gray*, p. 220.

11. *Jaddua.*]—This is said by Josephus to be the same high-priest, who went out in his pontifical dress to meet Alexander the Great, as that hero was coming to Jerusalem from the conquest of Tyre and Gaza, and who procured from him great privileges for the Jewish nation. See Hist. of Jews, ch. ii. p. 13, 14.

24. *With their brethren over against them.*]—For the ancient mode of singing among the Jews, see notes on Exod. xv. 1, 21; and on 1 Sam. xviii. 7.

27. *At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem.*]—As Moses dedicated the tabernacle in the wilderness, and Solomon the house of the Lord, when it was first built, so Nehemiah having put all things in good order, dedicated the city, as a place which God himself had chosen, and restored it to Him again, after it had been profaned by the devastations of the heathen.—*Matt. Poole, and Bp. Patrick.*

47. *And they sanctified holy things unto the Levites; and the Levites sanctified them unto the children of Aaron.*]—The people separated, or set apart, the tenth part of the produce of their lands for the use of the Levites; and the Levites separated from their tithes a tenth part for the priests. The people had no right to the tenth part, for it was holy; that is, it was to be separated from the rest, for the Levites; and the Levites had no right to the tenth part of their tithes, which they had received from the people, because it was to be set apart (which is called ‘sanctified’) for the children of Aaron; that is, the priests.—*Bp. Patrick.*

CHAP. XIII. VER. 1. *On that day they read in the book of Moses.*]—This did not happen immediately after the dedication, but some time after Nehemiah’s return from Persia: for it cannot be supposed that the people, who were so well-affected to the ministers of religion, should so soon forget and neglect them.—*Id.*

1. *That the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever.*]—This phrase, of ‘not entering into the congregation of the Lord,’ does not mean ‘the public assemblies;’ for men of all nations, if willing to become proselytes, were admitted into the Jewish communion: but it means a prohibition of marriage; for, according to the Rabbis, none of the house of Israel, of either sex, were to contract marriage with any Gentiles, unless first converted to their religion; and, even in that case, some were debarred from it for ever, others in part, and others only for a limited time. Of the first sort were all the seven nations of the Canaanites, Deut. vii.; of the second sort were the Moabites and the Ammonites, whose males were excluded for ever, but not their females; and of the third sort were the Edomites and Egyptians, with whom the Jews were not permitted to marry, until the third generation; but with all others they might freely make intermarriages, whenever the objects of their choice became thoroughly proselyted to their religion.—See *Prideaux.*

4. *Before this, Eliashib the priest, having the oversight of the chamber of the house of our God, &c.*]—Here the singular number is used for the plural; for he had not the care of ‘one chamber’ only, but of ‘all the chambers.’ It is most probable, that this Eliashib (for there were several of the name) who was the author of the following profanation of the house of God, was the high-priest: but he might die before Nehemiah returned from Babylon; for we hear nothing of the governor’s reprehending him for it, which he doubtless would otherwise have done.—*Prideaux.*

15. *Treading wine-presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves.*]—It has been said, that our translators seem to have been guilty of an oversight in rendering this verse, where they suppose, that sheaves of corn were brought into Jerusalem, at the very time when men were treading the wine-presses. This might appear a strange anachronism, since the harvest there was finished in, or before the third month, and the vintage was not till the seventh. It is described with greater accuracy by the author of the second book of Chronicles. There, we are told, that when the Israelites brought in the first-fruits of their corn, wine, oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field, and laid them by heaps, that in the third month they began to lay the foundation of the heaps, and finished them in the seventh month; and that when Hezekiah and the princes came and saw the heaps, they blessed the Lord and his people. The corn was fit to present to the Lord about the end of May, or in the beginning of June; but the wine and oil, or raisins and ripe olives, were not ready till the end of September, or, perhaps, the beginning of October.

This is plausible; but every one acquainted with the various business of husbandry knows, that sheaves of corn are brought into barns from ricks, or small stacks made in the fields, long after the harvest, even in the winter, and early spring months.

25. *Plucked off their hair.*]—To cut off the hair of guilty persons seems to be a punishment rather shameful than painful: yet it is thought, that pain was added to disgrace, and that they tore off the hair with violence, as if they were plucking a bird alive. This is the genuine signification of the Hebrew word used in this passage. Sometimes they put hot ashes on the skin, after they had torn off the hair, to make the pain the more exquisite. Thus they served adulterers at Athens; as the scholiast on Aristophanes observes (*in Nubibus*). This kind of punishment was common in Persia. King Artaxerxes, instead of plucking off the hair of such of his generals as had been guilty of a fault, obliged them to lay aside the tiara, says

Plutarch, (Apophthegm.) The Emperor Domitian caused the hair and beard of the philosopher Apollonius to be shaved. (*Philostrat. lib. iii. cap. 24.*)—See *Calmet's Dict. Art. Punishment.*

31. *Remember me, O my God, for good.*—How long Nehemiah lived after he had made the reformatations mentioned in this chapter; whether he continued in his place of governor, and whether he died in Judea, or in Persia, neither the sacred text nor Josephus informs us. The latter only says, that he died at an advanced age; and, indeed, even at the time when this book ends, he must have been at least seventy years old. It is most probable, however, that he continued in his government till the time of his death, supporting his character by the most exemplary zeal for justice and religion; and promoting the good of his nation, and the dignity of his office, by a magnificent hospitality.

Dean Prideaux concludes the first seven weeks of Daniel's prophecy with this last information of Nehemiah, which was finished, according to him, in the fifteenth year of Darius Nothus.—See his *Connect. An. 409, and Univ. Hist.*

From the death of Nehemiah to the birth of Christ, was an interval of about four hundred years; during which time the church of God underwent very great changes, of which we have an account in Josephus, &c. One of the worst was occasioned soon after Nehemiah's death, by Manasses, the brother of Jaddus, the high-priest, who having married the daughter of Sanballat, and being for that deprived of the priesthood, (she being of the seed of strangers) Sanballat, in favor of his son-in-law, built a temple on mount Gerizim, which was the occasion of a schism, that has continued to this day. See particularly from this period till the birth of Christ, the *Hist. of Jews, ch. ii*; and *Prolegom. No. vii.*

The temple of Gerizim was begun to be built in the year before Christ 408.—*Bp. Wilson.*

ESTHER.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS Book, in the Hebrew, is styled, 'The Volume of Esther.' It was received into the Jewish canon with peculiar veneration; and esteemed above many of the prophetic books, probably because it contains a description of the origin and ceremonies of the feast of Purim. It is called the Book of Esther, because it contains the history of this Jewish captive, who, by her remarkable accomplishments, gained the affections of Ahasuerus; and, by a marriage with him, was raised to the throne of Persia.

The author of this book is not certainly known. Some of the Christian fathers suppose it to have been written by Ezra; others contend that it was composed by Joachim, the high-priest of the Jews, and the grandson of Josedech. The Talmudists attribute it to the united labors of the great synagogue, which succeeded Ezra in the superintendence of the canon of Scripture. Lastly, other writers maintain, that the book was the joint production of Esther and Mordecai; who probably communicated an account of events so interesting to the whole nation to the great synagogue at Jerusalem; some of the members of which may, with great reason, be supposed to have digested the information thus received into its present form.

We have, however, no sufficient evidence to determine, nor is it, perhaps, of much importance to ascertain precisely, who was its author; but that it was a genuine and faithful description of what actually happened, is certain; not only from its admission into the canon, but also from the institution of the feast of Purim, which, from its first establishment, has been regularly observed as an annual solemnity, on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar, in commemoration of the great deliverance, which Esther, by her interest, procured; and which is even now celebrated among the Jews with many peculiar ceremonies, and with rejoicings even to intoxication. [See Calendar of the Jews; p. 71.]

There has been much difference of opinion concerning the period, which we should assign to the events recorded in this book. It is certain, from many instances, that the Jews distinguished foreign persons by names different from those which they bear in profane history; and, indeed, all nations are accustomed to corrupt proper names in conformity to the genius and pronunciation of their own language. Scaliger (*de Emendat. Temp.* lib. vi. p. 284.) contends, from a fanciful resemblance of names, that Ahasuerus was the same with Xerxes; whose queen, Amestris, he conceives, might have been Esther. Others have offered different conjectures; but the opinion of Prideaux seems most probable, who maintains, agreeably to the account of Josephus, the Septuagint, and the Apocryphal additions to this book, that Ahasuerus was Artaxerxes Longimanus; whose extraordinary favor to the Jews might in some measure arise from the suggestions of Esther. The history, therefore, may be supposed to have commenced about A. M. 3544, and to contain an account of a period, which extends from ten to twenty years.

The book describes the advancement of Esther; who, by the interest which she had with Ahasuerus, delivered the Jews from the great destruction, which had been contrived for them by Haman, an insolent favorite of the king. It presents

an interesting description of mortified pride, and of malice baffled to the destruction of its contrivers. It likewise exhibits a very lively representation of the vexations and troubles, the anxieties, treachery, and dissimulation, of a corrupt court. The manners are painted with great force and fidelity; and the vicissitudes and characters are displayed with dramatic effect.

The author seems to have been so intimately acquainted with the Persian customs, that some have conceived a notion, that he transcribed his work from the Persian chronicles. It has been remarked, that the name of God is not mentioned throughout the book; his superintending providence is, however, frequently illustrated. It is shewn, indeed, in every part of the work; disconcerting evil designs, and producing great events, by means seemingly inadequate.

Calmet asserts, on the authority of Paul Lucas, that the tombs of Mordecai and Esther are still shewn at Hamaden, or Ecbatana, in Persia, in the synagogue of the Jews, who are very numerous there.—*Dr. Gray.*

CHAPTER I.

VER. 1. *Ahasuerus.*—It is generally supposed, that this monarch was the Artaxerxes Longimanus of profane history. It is a strong confirmation of this opinion, that the Septuagint, throughout the whole book of Esther, wherever the name of Ahasuerus is mentioned, translates it Artaxerxes.—See *Prideaux*, and the Introduction to this book.

2. *When the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom.*—That is, when he enjoyed peace and tranquillity throughout his extensive dominions; for the history of his accession is as follows. Xerxes, his father, was privately murdered by Artabanes, captain of his guard, who instantly repaired to Ahasuerus, the third son of Xerxes, and pretended that Darius, his eldest brother, had committed this parricide, in order to make his way to the throne, intending also to cut off him, in

order to secure himself in the possession of it. Ahasuerus, believing this, went immediately to his brother's apartment, and, by the assistance of this wicked person and his guards, slew him, thinking that he was only acting in his own defence. The design of Artabanes was to usurp the regal power himself; but, for the present, he placed Ahasuerus on the throne, intending to depose him, as soon as matters were ripe for his purpose. But Magabyzus, who had married one of the sisters of Ahasuerus, discovered the whole plot to that monarch; upon which Ahasuerus cut off Artabanes, and his whole party, before their treason was come to maturity: and, it is probable, that he appointed the extraordinary feast mentioned in the following verses, to celebrate his deliverance.

2. *Shushan.*]—This was a celebrated city situated on the banks of the river Ulai, where the Persian monarchs, after the conquest of the Medes, in the reign of Cyrus, held their winter residence. It is said, that they passed the summer at Ecbatana, the autumn at Persepolis, and the rest of the year at Babylon. Shushan was the capital of Susiana. It is occasionally written Shushan, Susan, Susi, and Susa. Here it was that Nehemiah, in his distinguished office as cup-bearer, obtained permission of the king to return to Jerusalem, and rebuild its walls; and here the prophet Daniel saw the vision of the goat with one horn, (Dan. chap. viii.) in the third year of the reign of Belshazzar. This city is now called Tostar, or Schouster, and it is considered as the metropolis of Khosistan.—See *Calmet*, and *Prideaux*, An. 465.

6. *The beds were of gold and silver.*]—It was not a custom with the Orientalists to sit at their meals; they rather reclined on sofas, as we should now call them, instead of 'beds.' These were stuffed with the softest wool, and the frames, we may suppose, were richly ornamented with gold and silver. Instead of being gilded, as they sometimes now are, they were, perhaps, studded, or partly overlaid with lamina of the precious metals.

8. *And the drinking was according to the law; none did compel.*]—That is, the law established at the feast was, that no man should be compelled to drink more than he liked.

9. *Vashti the queen made a feast, &c.*]—Commentators have indulged themselves in conjectures to no purpose, in order to discover who this Vashti was. As she appears to have been selected from a great number of virgins, on account of her beauty, her family might have been obscure, and, for that reason, unnoticed. Dr. Shaw and other travellers inform us, that

the custom of treating men in separate apartments from the women still prevails at all festivals and entertainments in the East.

12. *But the queen Vashti refused to come.*]—From the Chaldee paraphrase, and the information of Pierke Elieser, we may learn, that Vashti's refusal to come originated from the instinctive emotions of modesty and shame; for this voluptuous monarch wished not only to exhibit her on account of her beauty, but to expose her intire person to the gaze of his assembled princes and courtiers. That such exhibitions were not unusual, the history of those times leaves us little reason to doubt.

13. *The wise men, which knew the times.*]—As the Persian kings did nothing without their magi, or wise men, who were great pretenders to astrology, some have inferred, that men of this sort were consulted to know whether it was a proper time to set about any thing, which the king had it in contemplation to perform; for such was the superstition of the eastern people, that, as the satyrist remarks,

—————Quicquid
Dixerit astrologus, credent a fonte relatum
Ammonis. JUVENAL, Sat. vi.

Such credit to astrologers is given,
What they foretel is deem'd a voice from heaven.

DRYDEN.

The explication, however, of the original, which Vitranga gives, is far from being improbable; namely, that these were men well versed in ancient history, and in the laws and customs of their country: they were qualified, therefore, to give the king counsel in all extraordinary and perplexed cases. Houbigant renders the passage thus: 'Then the king speaking to the wise men, who knew the law and judgment, (for the royal decrees were then established, when they were laid before those who knew the law and judgment, ver. 13, and for that reason he had by his side seven princes of Persia, Carshena, &c.) and said, ver. 15, 'What shall we do?' &c.—See *Le Clerc*.

CHAP. II. VER. 3. *Things for purification.*]—In the house of the women, or rather 'of the virgins,' as it should have been rendered, the Targum informs us, there were baths, unguents, perfumes, and every thing that could be necessary for the purposes of ornament, luxury, and cleanliness.

7. *He brought up Hadassah (that is, Esther), his uncle's daughter.*]—This woman was born in Babylon; and, therefore, in analogy to that language, they gave her the name of 'Hadassah,' which, in Chaldee, signifies 'a myrtle;' but her Persian

name was Esther, which some derive from the Greek word, *αστηρ*, 'a star.'—See *Bp. Patrick*, and *Pyle*.

9. *With such things as belonged to her.*—Having been selected by the king, she claimed, as a matter of right, an allowance for clothes, and a sumptuous table, during the interval that passed before she went to the king, which was one year. See verse 12.

9. *Seven maidens.*—These were intended to correspond with the days of the week; and it is said, that they waited on Esther in rotation. The Chaldee paraphrase mentions their names, and the days of their respective attendance.

15. *She required nothing.*—She was contented with her own natural beauty, says *Bp. Patrick*, and required nothing of art to recommend her.

18. *He made a release to the provinces.*—That is, perhaps, he remitted the tribute and the taxes, which they had been accustomed to pay, for the current year.

18. *Gave gifts, according to the state of the king.*—This probably alludes to the magnificent presents, which the Persian monarchs were accustomed to make their wives. We learn from *Herodotus* and *Athenæus*, that they gave them distinct cities and provinces, for the purpose of supplying them with different articles of dress. One was assigned for ornamenting the head and neck; another provided robes, zones, &c. for the waist; and the city of *Anthilla* was given to a Persian queen, we read, to supply her with shoes and sandals.

19. *Mordecai sat in the king's gate.*—*Dr. Shaw*, speaking of the cities in the east, says, 'If we quit the streets, and enter into any of the principal houses, we shall first pass through a porch, or gate-way, with benches on each side, where the master of the family receives visits, and dispatches his business; few persons, not even the nearest relations, having admission any farther, except upon extraordinary occasions.' See the notes referred to under 'Gate,' in the Index.

CHAP. III. VER. 4. *Whether Mordecai's matters would stand.*—That is, to see whether he would still persist in not paying the usual respects to *Haman*.

7. *Pur.*—This is a Persic word; in the Hebrew text it is explained by גורל, which signifies 'a lot.' It was a custom with the Persians, and neighbouring nations, to enquire whether certain days were prosperous, or not, for undertaking any enterprise, by casting lots. *Haman* often did this, and at length he found a day which, according to the lots, promised to be lucky; but God gave a striking proof of the futility of such expedients for prying into the events of futurity.

From this superstitious practice of casting lots, those days are called, from the word in the text, פֻּרִים, 'Purim.' See chap. ix. 31.—*Grotius*.

9. *And I will pay ten thousand talents of silver.*]—He promises to compensate the king for the loss of the tribute, which the Jews paid yearly, by the offer of this immense sum of money, which he expected to raise, it is probable, out of the effects of those who were to be massacred. See ver. 13.

9. *To the hands of those that have the charge of the business.*]—Not of those who were to conduct this horrid massacre; but of those who received the king's tribute, as appears from the following words.

12. *In the name of king Ahasuerus was it written.*]—See the royal decree, at length, in the apocryphal additions to this book, ch. xiii. 1—8.

13. *Letters were sent by posts.*]—The first institution of posts is generally ascribed to the Persians; for the kings of Persia, as *Diodorus Siculus* observes, (lib. xix.) that they might have intelligence of what passed in all the provinces of their extensive dominions, placed sentinels on eminences, at convenient distances, where towers were built; and these sentinels gave notice of public occurrences to each other, with a very loud and shrill voice, by which means intelligence was transmitted from one end of the kingdom to the other with great expedition. But as this could be practised only in cases of public news, which might be communicated to the whole nation, *Cyrus*, as *Xenophon* relates, (Cyropæd. lib. viii.) established couriers, places for post-horses on all the high roads, and offices, where they might deliver their packets to each other. This, says our author, they did night and day; so that, not being detained by any weather, they were supposed by many to travel faster than cranes can fly. This also is said by *Herodotus*, (lib. viii.) who acquaints us farther, that *Xerxes*, in his famous expedition against Greece, established posts from the *Ægean* sea to *Shushan*, at certain distances, as far as a horseman could ride with speed, that he might send notice to his capital of whatever happened in the army. The Greeks borrowed the use of posts from the Persians; and, in imitation of them, called them *αγγαροι*.

Among the Romans, *Augustus* established public posts, who at first were running footmen; but were afterwards changed for post chariots and horses, which must have been nearly on the plan of our mail coaches. *Hadrian* improved upon this, and having reduced the posts to great regularity, discharged the people from the obligation they were before under of furnishing horses and chariots. With the empire the use of posts de-

clined. About the year 807, Charlemagne endeavoured to restore them, but his design was not prosecuted by his successors. In France, Louis XI. set up posts at two leagues distance throughout the kingdom. Count Taxis established them in Germany, and had for his recompense in 1616, a grant of the office of post-master-general to himself and his heirs for ever. About eight hundred years ago, couriers were employed in the Ottoman empire; and at this time there are some among the Chinese; but their appointment is only to carry orders from the king, and the governors of provinces; and, in a word, for public affairs, and those of the greatest consequence.—See *Chambers's Dict.* and *Dr. Dodd.*

CHAP. IV. VER. 11. *Whosoever, whether man, or woman, shall come unto the king.*—Ever since the reign of Dejoces, king of Media, Herodotus informs us, that, for the security of the king's person, it was enacted, that no one should be admitted into his presence; but that if any one had business with him, he should transact it through the medium of his ministers. The custom passed from the Medes to the Persians. This, therefore, was the ancient law of the country, and not procured, as some imagine, by Haman. Though it cannot be denied, that the reason at first might have been, not only the preservation of the king's person, but a politic contrivance of the great officers of state to engross the king to themselves, by allowing admittance to none, except those whom they might think proper to introduce.—See *Le Clerc.*

14. *Who knoweth whether thou, &c.*—The meaning is, 'Who knows whether thou art not elevated to thy present dignity by the providence of God, to save thy afflicted countrymen on such an occasion as this?'

CHAP. V. VER. 6. *Banquet of wine.*—Olearius (p. 709) thus describes an entertainment at the Persian court. 'The floor of the hall was covered with a cotton cloth, which was covered with all sorts of fruit and sweetmeats in basons of gold. With them was served up excellent Schiras wine. After an hour's time the sweetmeats were removed, to make way for the more substantial part of the entertainment, such as rice, boiled and roast mutton, &c. When the company had been at table an hour and a half, warm water was brought, in a ewer of gold, for washing; and grace being said, they began to retire without speaking a word, according to the custom of the country.' The time for drinking wine was at the beginning, not at the close, of the entertainment.

10. *Refrained himself.*—This verb is always used by our translators in an active sense; and it here means, that he check-

ed, or restrained his indignation. It is derived from the Latin word *refrenare*, which signifies to bridle, or curb, as a rider does his horse. See Ps. cxix. 101.

12. *Esther the queen did let no man come in with the king unto the banquet that she had prepared, but myself.*]—Plutarch, in his life of Artaxerxes, tells us, that none but the king's mother, and his real wife, were permitted to sit at his table; and therefore he mentions it as a condescension in that prince, that he sometimes invited his brothers. So that this particular favor was a matter of which Haman had some reason to be proud.

13. *Yet all this availeth me nothing.*]—These are the words of one, who, though high in station and power, confessed himself to be miserable. Ahasuerus had advanced to the chief dignity in his kingdom, Haman, an Amalekite, who inherited all the ancient enmity of his race to the Jewish nation. He appears, from what is recorded of him, to have been a very wicked minister. Raised to greatness without merit, he employed his power solely for the gratification of his passions. As the honors which he possessed were next to royal, his pride was every day fed with that servile homage, which is peculiar to Asiatic courts; and all the servants of the king prostrated themselves before him. In the midst of this general adulation, one person only stooped not to Haman. This was Mordecai the Jew, who, knowing this Amalekite to be an enemy to the people of God, and, with virtuous indignation, despising that insolence of prosperity with which he saw him lifted up, 'bowed not, nor did him reverence.' On this appearance of disrespect from Mordecai, Haman was full of wrath; but he thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone. Personal revenge was not sufficient to satisfy him. So violent and black were his passions, that he resolved to exterminate the whole nation to which Mordecai belonged. Invited by Ahasuerus to a royal banquet, which Esther the queen had prepared, 'he went forth that day joyful, and with a glad heart.' But behold how slight an incident was sufficient to poison his joy! As he went forth, he saw Mordecai in the king's gate; who still refused to do him homage. 'He stood not up, nor moved for him;' although he knew well the formidable designs which Haman was preparing to execute. One private man, who despised his greatness, and disdained submission, while a whole kingdom trembled before him; one spirit, which the utmost stretch of his power could neither subdue nor humble, blasted his triumphs. His whole soul was shaken with a storm of passion. Wrath, pride, and desire of revenge, rose into fury. With difficulty he restrained himself in public; but as soon as he came to his own house, he was forced to disclose the

agony of his mind. He gathered together his friends and family, with Zeresh his wife. 'He told them of the glory of his riches, and the multitude of his children,' &c. After all this preamble, what is the conclusion? 'Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate.' How miserable is vice, when one guilty passion is capable of creating so much torment! Conceive, if you can, a person more thoroughly wretched, than one reduced to make this humiliating confession, that though surrounded with power, opulence, and pleasure, he was lost to all happiness, through the fierceness of his resentment; and was at that moment stung by disappointment, and torn by rage, beyond what he could bear.—*Dr. Blair*, vol. i. Sermon vii.

CHAP. VI. VER. 1. *The book of records.*]—In these diaries, which we now call journals, in which was set down what passed every day, the manner of the Persians was to record the names of those who had done the king any signal service. Accordingly, Josephus informs us, that upon the secretary's reading these journals, he took notice of such a person, who had great honors and possessions given him, as a reward for a glorious and remarkable action; and of another, who made his fortune by the bounties of his prince for his fidelity: but that when he came to the particular story of the conspiracy of the two eunuchs against the person of the king, and of the discovery of this treason by Mordecai, the secretary read it over, and was passing forward to the next, when the king stopped him, and asked if that person had any reward given him for his service. This shews a singular providence of God, that the secretary should read in that very part of the book, where the service of Mordecai was recorded.—See *Jewish Antiq.* lib. xi. cap. 6.

8. *And the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal which is set upon his head.*]—Herodotus relates, that the kings of Persia had horses peculiar to themselves, which were brought from Armenia, and were remarkable for their beauty. If the same law prevailed in Persia as in Judea, no man might ride on the king's horse, any more than sit on his throne, or hold his sceptre. The crown-royal was not to be set on the head of the man, but on the head of the horse. This interpretation is allowed by Aben-Ezra, by the Targum, and by the Syriac version. No mention is afterward made of the crown as set upon the head of Mordecai; nor would Haman have dared to advise that which could not be granted. But it was usual to put the crown-royal on the head of a horse led in state; and this we are assured was a custom in Persia, as it is with

the Ethiopians to this day. With the Romans, also, horses employed in drawing triumphal chariots were crowned.—*Dr. Gill*, in loc.

7—9. Pitts gives an account (p. 198) of a cavalcade at Algiers on a person's turning Mohammedan, which was designed to do him, as well as the law of that country, honor. 'The apostate is to get on horseback on a stately steed, with a rich saddle and fine trappings; he is also richly habited, and has a turban on his head, but nothing of this is to be called his own; only there are given him about two or three yards of broad cloth, which is laid before him on the saddle. The horse, with him on his back, is led all round the city, which he is several hours in doing. The apostate is attended with drums and other music, and twenty or thirty serjeants. They march in order on each side of the horse, with naked swords in their hands. The cryer goes before, with a loud voice giving thanks to God for the proselyte that is made.' The conformity of custom in the instance now cited, and this passage in Esther, must appear remarkable.—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 409.

12. *Having his head covered.*]—See note on 2 Sam. xv. 30.

CHAP. VII. VER. 4. *Although the enemy could not, &c.*]—Esther means that Haman was not a man of such consequence as to countervail the infamy, which would fall on the king, and the loss which his kingdom would sustain, by the sacrifice of a whole nation to his resentment. Aben-Ezra understands by the Hebrew word, *הָצָר*, 'distress,' or 'misery.' This gives a different sense to the passage, which would then be, 'Though the distress, which we should suffer, would not compensate for the injury which the king would sustain, by losing so many tributary subjects.'

CHAP. VIII. VER. 2. *His ring.*]—A ring was in ancient times, as well as in modern, one of the insignia of office, and a token of authority. See note on Gen. xli. 42, and compare 1 Macc. vi. 14, 15.

8. *They covered Haman's face.*]—The majesty of the kings of Persia did not allow malefactors to look at them. As soon as Haman, therefore, was so considered, his face was covered. Some curious correspondent examples may be seen collected together in Poole's Synopsis. We find from Pococke that this custom still continues; for, speaking of the artifice by which an Egyptian bey was taken off, he says, (Travels, vol. i. p. 179) 'A man being brought before him like a malefactor just taken, with his hands behind him, as if tied, and a napkin put over his head, as malefactors commonly have, when he came into his presence, suddenly shot him dead.'—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 403.

8. *The writing may no man reverse.*]—No, not the king himself; and this was the reason that the king was forced not to reverse, but to give a contradictory decree; that if the Jews, pursuant to the first decree, were assaulted, they might, by virtue of the second, defend themselves, and even slay their enemies.—*Bp. Wilson.*

9. *The gallows.*]—The marginal reading is, ‘the Tree,’ on which it is probable he was crucified, to which the expression of ‘hanging’ is particularly applicable.

10. *Dromedaries.*]—See note on Job ix. 25.

11. *The king granted the Jews which were in every city, to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, &c.*]—This second decree, procured by Mordecai, gave the Jews authority, if any attempt were made upon them, either by large numbers, or small parties, not only to defend themselves, but to make as great a slaughter of their assailants as they could; and even to take possession of their goods, as Haman had procured them licence to seize those of the Jews.—*Bp. Patrick.*

CHAP. IX. VER. 19. *Sending portions.*]—The eastern princes and people not only invite their friends to feasts, but it is their custom to send a portion of the banquet to those that cannot well come to it, especially their relations, and those in a state of mourning. (MS. Chardin.) Thus, when the grand emir found that it incommoded M. d’Arvieux to eat with him, he desired him to take his own time for eating, and sent him from his kitchen what he liked, and at the time he chose. (Voy. dans la Palest. p. 20.) (Nehem. viii. 10. 2 Sam. xi. 8.)—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 108.

26. *Wherefore they called these days Purim.*]—This festival was to be kept two days successively, the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar, ver. 21. See note on chap. iii. 7. On both days of the feast, the modern Jews read over the Megillah, or book of Esther, in their synagogues. The copy there read must not be printed, but written on vellum in the form of a roll; and the names of the ten sons of Haman are written on it in a peculiar manner, being ranged, they say, like so many bodies hanged on a gibbet. The reader must pronounce all these names in one breath. Whenever Haman’s name is pronounced, they make a terrible noise in the synagogue. Some drum with their feet on the floor, and the boys have mallets, with which they knock and make a noise. They prepare themselves for their carnival by a previous fast, which should continue three days, in imitation of Esther’s (chap. iv. 16.); but they have mostly reduced it to one day. See *Jennings’s Jewish Antiq.* vol. ii. p. 305.

J O B.

INTRODUCTION.

No book in the Holy Scriptures has given rise to greater variety of opinions and conjectures than the Book of Job. It is distinguished for the grandeur and sublimity of its poetry, and for the exalted sentiments of piety, which breathe through the whole. Its form of composition has been said to approach the ancient drama; but it rather resembles an episode of an heroic poem, or one of those dialogues, which are still to be found in the writings of Plato and Tully. The judicious critic will admit, perhaps, that it partakes of all these three species of composition; and, from its excellence, might have afforded imitators a model of each.

The moral of this divine poem must, in all ages, be consolatory and important. A virtuous and good man, suffering the greatest reverses of fortune, and enduring the severest afflictions, is tempted by the harsh judgments of his friends to consider his sufferings as the effect of his sins; or to doubt the justice and mercy of his great Creator. He persists in vindicating his own general character and conduct; and, after a long period of disease and affliction, which was intended for his trial, he is restored to greater happiness and prosperity than he had enjoyed before.

The great outlines of Job's history, it is probable, were founded in fact; but whatever might have been the credulity of former times, there are few persons, at present, who will

think it necessary to believe, that a dialogue consisting of many hundred verses of the sublimest poetry, was uttered verbatim, and extempore, as we now read it; or that the introduction of Satan, at the beginning, and of the Almighty himself, towards the conclusion, as two of the characters, is to be considered in any other light than as an allegorical representation, calculated to give dignity to the poem, and a sanction to the divine truths which it inculcates.

Not all the learning and critical sagacity of past ages have been able to decide, with any probability, who was the author of this book, or at what period of the world it was composed. It has been ascribed, 1. To Job himself. 2. To Moses, who was supposed to have written it, or translated it from Arabic, for the purpose of comforting and supporting the Israelites, during their sojourning in the wilderness. 3. To Solomon. 4. To Ezra, who produced it after the captivity, to cheer and encourage his countrymen, after their long and severe sufferings. 5. To Elihu, from the slight, internal evidence contained in the thirty-second chapter, and the circumstance that the Almighty, in his address, is neither made to reprove his speech to Job, nor to pass any commendations on it. 6. A German critic of the present day (C. D. Ilgen), ascribes it to a descendant of Elihu as its author, in the third century of the Egyptian bondage. He supposes also, that Job was a descendant of Esau, and that he resided in the vale of Damascus. It would be tiresome and useless to detail other opinions, which can admit only of degrees of probability, whatever conjectures may be indulged on the subject. But when external evidence cannot be procured, it is wise to have recourse to that which is internal. A few observations, having this for their basis, will have more weight, perhaps, with the intelligent reader, than volumes of such conjectural criticisms as are fanciful and arbitrary.

It has been said, that the manners of the poem are patriarchal; but it should be remembered, that the manners of the

Arabs do not vary; and, that though the age of Job may be put back to the time of Abraham, it does not prove that the author of this poem lived at that period, any more than that Moses was contemporary with Noah, Abraham, or Jacob. See Doederlein's *Obs. in Lib. Job.* p. 2.

It has been asserted, that the author must have been a Hebrew, or resident in Judea, because Job is described as 'the greatest of all the men of the East.' This could only be said by a writer, who, with relation to Arabia, lived in a westerly direction; for, as to the scene of the poem, there cannot be any doubt that it is laid somewhere in that country. But it should be remembered, that this remark is made in the proem, or introduction, which is not written in verse, and which, with the conclusion, are supposed to have been added by another hand. In the account also here given of Satan, whether we consider it as an allegory, and understand it tropologically, or take it in a literal sense, it must be admitted, that it exhibits a species of belief, or at least forms of expression, with respect to supernatural agents, which are not to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures, till after the period of the Babylonish captivity. In ch. v. 1, the mediation of saints, or angels, seems to be recognised also, as a means of procuring deliverance from calamity, which is a doctrine many ages subsequent to the time of Moses. See note on ch. xxiii. 23. Some remarks on the celebrated passage ch. xix. 25—27, and on other texts, will be found in their proper places.

It has been observed by Grotius, Schultens and others, that the book of Job abounds with idioms, which are not purely Hebrew; and that it contains more than a hundred words, which are partly Syriac, Arabic, or Chaldee, and which were unknown to the writers who lived before the captivity. Jerome confesses, also, that in translating this book, he was frequently obliged to have recourse to the Arabic and Syriac. It has been farther remarked, that there are some forms of expression, which are only to be found in Daniel, Ezra, and

the Chaldee paraphrasts ; and the parallel texts will refer the reader to many passages, which may be deemed more than casual coincidences of thought and expression, and which are either transcribed, or evidently imitated, from the Book of Psalms, the Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, &c. unless we suppose all these books to be of later date.—See *Rosenmüller*, in *Prolegom.* p. 31—34.

It may seem very remarkable, that there should not be more evident allusions to the books of Moses in this poem ; but if its author lived about the reign of Manasseh, we know not only the gross and sinful neglect, but the extreme ignorance of the Jews, even with respect to the laws of Moses, at that period. (See 2 Kings xxi ; xxii. 8—12.) Besides, it is not improbable that the Book of Job was originally written in Arabic, and only translated by some Jewish prophet into the Hebrew language, such as it was in his day. Aben Ezra expressly says, that ‘it is a translation from a foreign language ;’ and the learned Spanheim was among the first, who thought it was originally written in Arabic. Schultens, Houbigant, and others, have adopted the same opinion. This will account for the modern words and foreign idioms with which it abounds.

But there is a circumstance, of trifling importance in other respects, which may serve, in some measure, to settle the æra of this poem, though it seems to have escaped the notice of former commentators. The action of clapping the hands is noticed in Job more than once (see ch. xxvii. 23 ; xxxiv. 37.), and it is evidently an expression of insult, indignation, and contempt. It signifies the same in Lam. ii. 5 ; Ezek. xxv. 6 ; Nahum iii. 19 ; and Ecclus. xii. 18 : but wherever it occurs in the Psalms, or at an earlier period of the Holy Scriptures, it denotes, on the contrary, joy, exultation, and applause. See, particularly, Ps. xlvii. 1 ; and 2 Kings xi. 12.

It is evident, however, that the Book of Job was written before the time of Ezekiel, because this prophet mentions him ; (ch. xiv. 14.) unless it be supposed, which is not pro-

bable, that he had heard of Job's history and character from tradition, before the poem on the subject was composed. Rosenmüller is of opinion that it was written in the reign of Solomon, or soon after.

One great object of this divine book seems to have been, to correct the misapprehensions of the Jews with respect to the Mosaic doctrine of temporal rewards and punishments; to establish the uncontrolled sovereignty of God, in opposition to the absurd notion of two independent principles, the one of good and the other of evil; (see note on Tobit vi. 7.) and to administer the true consolations of religion, founded on the justice and mercy of God, to every human being, that is suffering, in this world of trial, under any extraordinary visitations of Divine Providence. These great ends will be answered, whether the book were written by Job himself, by Moses, or by Ezra; whether it was originally composed in Hebrew, or Arabic; whether it appeared for the comfort and instruction of mankind, while the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, when they were suffering a state of wretched bondage in Babylon, or when they first returned to their own country, and were preparing to rebuild the walls and temple of Jerusalem.

CHAPTER I.

VER. 1. *The land of Uz.*]—The land of Uz, or Gnutz, is evidently Idumæa, as appears from Lam. iv. 21. Uz was the grandson of Seir, the Horite, Gen. xxxvi. 20, 21, 28. 1 Chron. i. 38, 42. Seir inhabited that mountainous tract, which was called by his name antecedent to the time of Abraham; but his posterity being expelled, it was occupied by the Idumæans, Gen. xiv. 6; Deut. ii. 12. Two other men are mentioned by the name of Uz; one the grandson of Shem, the other the son of Nachor, the brother of Abraham; but whether any district was called after their name is not clear. Idumæa is a part of Arabia Petræa, situated on the southern extremity of the tribe of Judah, Numb. xxxiv. 3; Josh. xv.

1, 21. The land of Uz therefore appears to have been between Egypt and Philistia, Jer. xxv. 20, where the order of the places seems to have been accurately observed in reviewing the different nations from Egypt to Babylon; and the same people seem again to be described in exactly the same situations, Jer. xlvi.

3. *Three thousand camels.*]—The Arabs used these animals in war, in their caravans, and also for food. One of their ancient poets, whose hospitality grew into a proverb, is reported to have killed yearly, in a certain month, ten camels every day for the entertainment of his friends.—*Pococke*, Specim. Hist. Arab. p. 343.

3. *Five hundred she-asses.*]—It is remarkable, that in this passage female asses only are enumerated. The reason is, because in them great part of their wealth consisted; the males being few, and not held in equal estimation. We find that the former were chosen for riding by the natives of those countries: and the ass of Balaam is distinguished as a female. They were probably led to this choice from convenience; for, where the country was barren, or uncultivated, no other animal could subsist so easily: and there was another superior advantage in the female; that, whoever traversed these wilds upon a she-ass, if he could but find sufficient browse and water for it, was sure to be rewarded with a pleasing and nutritious beverage.—*Bryant's Observations*, p. 61.

3. *So that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.*]—Job might well be styled the greatest man in the land of Uz, when he was possessed of half as many camels as a modern king of Persia. The king of Persia being in Mazanderan in the year 1676, the Tartars set upon the camels of the king in the month of February, and took three thousand of them, which was a great loss to him (for he has but seven thousand in all, if their number should be complete); especially considering that it was winter, when it was difficult to procure others in a country, which was a stranger to commerce; and their importance, these beasts carrying all the baggage; for which reason they are called 'the ships of Persia.'—*Sir J. Chardin*.

The men of the East, the children of the East, or eastern nations, seems to have been the general appellation for that mingled race of people, (as they are called, Jer. xxv. 20.) who inhabited between Egypt and the Euphrates, bordering upon Judea from the South to the East; the Idumæans, the Amalekites, the Midianites, the Moabites, the Amorites. (See Judg. vi. 3. Isa. xi. 14.) Of these the Idumæans and Amalekites certainly

possessed the southern parts. See Numb. xxxiv. 3; xiii. 29; 1 Sam. xxvii. 8, 10. This appears to be the true state of the case; the whole region between Egypt and the Euphrates was called 'the East,' at first with respect to Egypt, where the learned Jos. Mede thinks the Israelites acquired this mode of speaking, (Mede's Works, p. 467.) and afterwards absolutely, without any relation to situation, or circumstances. Abraham is said to have sent the sons of his concubines, Hagar and Keturah, 'eastward, to the country which is commonly called the East,' Gen. xxv. 6, where the name of the region seems to have been derived from the same situation. Solomon is reported, 'to have excelled in wisdom all the eastern people, and all Egypt,' 1 Kings iv. 30; that is, all the neighbouring people on that quarter; for there were people beyond the boundaries of Egypt, and bordering on the south of Judea, who were famous for wisdom, namely, the Idumæans, (see Jer. xlix. 7. Ob. 8.) to whom we may well believe this passage might have some relation. Thus, Jehovah addressed the Babylonians; 'Arise, ascend unto Kedar, and lay waste the children of the East,' Jer. xlix. 28, notwithstanding these were really situated to the west of Babylon. Although Job, therefore, be accounted one of the East, it by no means follows that his residence must be in Arabia Deserta.

3. *Seven thousand sheep, &c.*]—Michaelis observes, that so many round numbers and multiples of them occur in the book of Job, as to render it almost impossible for it to be the effect of mere chance. Ten children perish, seven sons (which, though not a round number, is yet held sacred and mysterious by the Orientalists) and three daughters; 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 1000 oxen, and exactly half the number of asses. In lieu of these, there are restored to him, 14,000 sheep, 6000 camels, 2000 oxen, and 1000 asses, exactly the duplicate of the former numbers, together with exactly the same number of children as he had lost, seven sons and three daughters, and these from one wife. The same principle is found to extend to the years of Job's prosperity, which are multiples of the number seventy.

These circumstances, says this learned professor, betray art and fiction in the narrator, who has introduced these round numbers, which we know are the first to present themselves to the mind. It bears no appearance of chance, or casualty; which, when it predominates in a series of events, produces a wonderful variety, but very little regularity, or equality. The name of Job too, which in the Arabic means 'returning to God,' and loving him, and hating whatever is contrary to him, is so adapted to the character of his latter years, that we can never

suppose it a name given to him by his parents, but invented by the author of the story.—See *Bp. Lowth's Prælect.* vol. ii. p. 363, by Dr. G. Gregory.

4. *Every one his day.*—We are to understand by this, his birth-day; for so Schultens and others interpret the Hebrew word יוֹמִי. The same expression occurs chap. iii. 1, where Job is said to have cursed his day; that is, the day on which he was born, as appears from ver. 3. We learn from Herodotus, that it was a usual custom among the Orientalists to celebrate birth-days with great festivity and expense.

5. *And cursed God in their hearts.*—The Hebrew word בֵּרַךְ signifies ‘to bless;’ and as it has been usual in all ages for friends, on taking leave of each other, to pronounce some short form of blessing by way of adieu, the same word is sometimes used to take leave, forsake, or renounce; and the text might have been rendered with more propriety, perhaps, ‘It may be that my sons have sinned, and renounced God in their hearts.’—See *Rosenmüller*.

Parkhurst, however, is of opinion, that Job’s fear was lest his sons should have blessed the false Elohim: but this seems a forced and imaginary interpretation.

6. *Now there was a day, &c.*—The reader will scarcely fail to observe, that the author of this book here introduces characters and opinions, which are no where to be found in the theology of Moses. Satan is described as traversing the regions of this sublunary world, inflicting evils and calamities on mankind, with a view to prove the fortitude of their virtues, and the sincerity of their piety. When his agency is thus considered, in subservience to the will of God, we may regard it as the means of carrying the dispensations of Providence into effect, and of constituting this life, a school of discipline and trial. From being admitted into the presence of God, or rather from presenting himself before the great Jehovah, at the same time with his heavenly host, the Satan of Job cannot be considered as that great enemy of God and man, who is represented as cast out of heaven for apostacy and rebellion; and ‘delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;’ (2 Peter ii. 4; and Jude 6.) but rather as the ministering spirit, in the parabolic language of Scripture, which furnishes the means of proving the strength, and exercising the patience, of human virtue. Such nearly was the theology of the ancient Persians, with respect to ministering angels, who were supposed to notice and report the events of this world to the Creator of the universe. (*Hyde, de Relig. Vet. Pers.* p. 158, 178, 110.) There is not, perhaps, a stronger proof in the whole book of the recent

date, comparatively speaking, in which its author wrote, or, at least the author of this Introduction, than this representation of the character of Satan.

‘It is surely more becoming,’ says Michaelis, ‘to consider the exordium, in which Satan appears as the accuser of Job, rather in the light of a fable, than of a true narrative. It is not credible, that such a conversation ever took place between the Almighty and Satan, who is supposed to return with news from the terrestrial regions. Nor will it suffice to answer that the great outline of the fact only is true; and that the exordium is set off with some poetical ornaments, among which is to be accounted the conversation between God and Satan: for, on this very conversation, the whole plot is founded, and the whole story and catastrophe depends. One of the best men is thrown into so many unexpected and undeserved evils, that neither he nor his adversaries are able to conceive how it can be consistent with a benevolent being, to plunge a good man into such great afflictions; nor has God condescended to explain the motives of it to them, but reproves them all for investigating matters beyond their reach. But the author of the book undoes the knot, which is left unresolved in these conversations, and gives the reader to understand how indifferently those reason concerning the Divine Providence, and the happiness or misery of mankind, who are only partially informed of causes and events. The Almighty acts for the honor of Job, of human nature, and of piety itself. He permits Job to be unhappy for a time, and refutes the accusations of Satan even by the very means, which he himself pointed out. Suppose, therefore, that what is thus related of Satan be fictitious, and all the rest true; instead of the difficulty being done away, the consequence will be, that the whole plot remains without any solution.’

To these remarks of the learned German professor it has been observed, that, though we should not contend for the literal acceptation of the exordium; though we should even admit, that it is not probable any such conversation ever took place between the Almighty Governor of the universe, and the great enemy of mankind, as is related in the first chapter; yet it by no means follows, that the inspired writer had no grounds whatever for what he describes, perhaps, poetically. The manner in which the Deity and the other celestial intelligences are spoken of in this poem appears necessary, when the human mind is called upon to contemplate their actions, and may be considered as a kind of personification, in accommodation to our limited faculties, and is common in many other parts of

Scripture.—See *Bp. Lowth's* Prælect. vol. ii. p. 368; and *Döderlein*, in loco.

7. *Going, walking.*]—These expressions mean, in the Hebrew idiom, vigilant execution of any ministry, or office. Zech. i. 10, 11.

15. *The Sabeans fell upon them.*]—If it could be ascertained, that these were inhabitants of that part of Arabia, which is called Sheba, it would serve materially to fix the part of the country, in which the scene of this ancient dramatic poem is laid. But the Hebrew expression is שֶׁבָּא, 'Seba fell upon them;' and *Seba* may mean a set of banditti, or plunderers. The authors of the Septuagint version understood it in this sense, for they have as equivalent, οἱ αἰχμαλωτευόντες.

17. *The Chaldeans made out three bands.*]—It may be asked, how the Chaldeans, who lived on the borders of the Euphrates, could make depredations on the camels of Job, who lived in Idumæa, at so great a distance. This too is thought a sufficient cause for assigning Job a situation in Arabia Deserta, and not far from the Euphrates. But what should prevent the Chaldeans, as well as the Sabeans, a people addicted to rapine, and roving about at immense distances for the sake of plunder, from wandering through these defenceless regions, which were divided into tribes and families, rather than into nations, and pervading from the Euphrates even to Egypt?

Farther, I would ask on the other hand, whether it be probable that all the friends of Job, who lived in Idumæa and its neighbourhood, should instantly be informed of every thing that could happen to Job in the desert of Arabia, or on the confines of Chaldea, and immediately repair thither? Or whether it be reasonable to think, that some of them being inhabitants of Arabia Deserta, it should be concerted among them to meet at the residence of Job; since it is evident, that Eliphaz lived at Theman, in the extreme parts of Idumæa? With respect to the Aisitas of Ptolemy (for so it is written, and not Ausitas), it has no agreement, not so much as in a single letter, with the Hebrew Gnutz. The translators of the Septuagint indeed call that country by the name Ausitida, but they describe it as situated in Idumæa; and they consider Job himself an Idumæan, and a descendant of Esau. See the appendix of the Septuagint to the book of Job; and *Hyde*, Not. in Peritzol. chap. xi.—*Bp. Lowth*.

20. *And shaved his head.*]—It was an usual sign of mourning among the Jews and neighbouring nations, to shave the head. This was the practice of Job; and, in Jer. xli. 5, we read of fourscore men who were going to lament the desolations of Je-

rusalem, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent. It was also customary among the Persians. (Quint. Curt. de Gestis Alexand. l. x. c. 5. § 17.) Suetonius in his life of Caligula observes, that on the death of Cæsar Germanicus, some barbarous nations at war among themselves, and with the Romans, agreed to a cessation of hostilities, as if their grief had been of a domestic nature, and on an occasion which alike concerned them both. He adds, 'Regulos quosdam (ferunt) barbam posuisse et uxorum capita rasisse ad indicium maximi luctus.' See also Jer. vii. 29. Micah i. 16. Isaiah vii. 20.

CHAP. II. VER. 3. *To destroy him without cause.*—Houbigant renders this clause, 'That I might trouble him in vain.'

4. *Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.*—Before the invention of money, trade used to be carried on by barter; that is, by exchanging one commodity for another. The men who had been hunting in the woods for wild beasts would carry their skins to market, and exchange them perhaps for so many bows and arrows. As these traffickers were liable to be robbed, they sometimes agreed to give a party of men a share for defending them, and skins were a very ancient species of tribute: with them they redeemed their own shares of property and their lives. It is to one, or both of these customs, that this proverbial expression alludes.—Biblical Researches, vol. ii. p. 88. See, also, *Poole's Synopsis*.

6. *His life.*—By נַפְשׁוֹ in this text, Maimonides understands 'his mind,' or 'intellectual powers.'—See *Grotius*.

7. *Sore boils.*—Michaelis, Doederlein, and others have labored to prove, that these proceeded from that loathsome disease called 'Elephantiasis.' See note on Deut. xxviii. 35.

8. *To scrape himself withal.*—This proceeded from the intolerable itching, which attended his disease. Vid. *Aræum*, lib. ii. c. 13.

8. *And he sat down among the ashes.*—The ashes among which Job sat down were those of the hearth. This was considered by the ancients as a sacred place, and peculiarly proper for a person under deep affliction petitioning for relief. Persons under extreme sufferings appear to have considered ashes as affording them an asylum, or as the means of deep humiliation and atonement; and upon this principle we read of their casting them on their heads, sprinkling them on their garments, swallowing them, and sometimes mixing them with their bread. See ver. 12.

9. *Thine integrity.*—By 'integrity,' we are to understand here that soundness of principle, which led Job to repose the

most perfect and unshaken confidence in the justice and goodness of Almighty God.

9. *Curse God, and die.*]—This may be rendered, ‘ Bless God, and die.’ See note on chap. i. 5.

10. *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.*]—Sanctius thinks that Job refers to the Idumæan women, who, like other heathens, when their gods did not please them, or when they could not obtain of them what they desired, would reproach and cast them away, and throw them into the fire, or the water, as the Persians are said to have done. But, perhaps, by ‘ foolish’ may be meant ‘ idolaters,’ as Ps. lxxiv. 18.

13. *None spake a word unto him.*]—They thought that he was suffering for his sins; and, in his present deplorable state, would not aggravate his misery by reproaches. Seven days was the time appointed for solemn mourning. See Gen. i. 10; 1 Sam. xxxi. 13; and the parallel Texts.

CHAP. III. VER. 3. *Let the day perish wherein I was born.*]—The Greeks had their *αποφραδες*, and the Romans their ‘ dies infausti;’ that is, certain days which had been distinguished by some great calamity. On these, therefore, they did not indulge themselves in any mirth, or pleasure, and expected no good event to happen to them. Tacitus relates (Annal. lib. xiv. § 12.) that the senate, to flatter Nero, decreed, ‘ ut dies natalis Agrippinæ inter nefastos esset;’ ‘ that the birth-day of Agrippina should be reckoned among the unlucky days.’

5. *Terrify it.*]—Rather, ‘ Render it terrible.’

8. *Who are ready to raise up their mourning.*]—He alludes to those desperate people, who are prepared to commit any rash act, that might give them cause for future sorrow. It is probable that there were persons at this time, whose imprecations were supposed to have some effect, like those of Balaam, who was sent for to curse Israel. See Numb. xxii.

See the Marginal Reading, which instead of ‘ their mourning,’ has ‘ Leviathan,’ meaning, perhaps, the crocodile; and the expression may be proverbial for persons who are in such a state of despair, as to be tempted to rush on certain destruction.

11. *Why died I not from the womb?*]—The Septuagint reads, ‘ Why died I not in the womb,’ which avoids tautology, and seems a preferable reading. A mutilated Ω might in ancient manuscripts have been easily mistaken for a Δ . The present reading, however, may mean, ‘ Why died I not immediately as I was born?’

12. *Why did the knees, &c.*]—Why was I fondled on my mother’s knees, and thus prevented from perishing? or why

was I fostered at her breast? The latter part of the verse should have been in the same tense as the former.

Dr. Gill would read, 'Why did the knees receive me?' And observes, this is not to be understood of the mother; but either of the midwife, who received the new-born infant into her lap, or of the father, who usually took the child upon his knees as soon as it was born, Gen. l. 23. This custom obtained among the Greeks and Romans. Hence the goddess Levana had her name, causing the father in this way to own the child.

14. *Which builded desolate places, &c.*]—This would be better in the present tense, 'Who build desolate places for themselves.' This is not an allusion, as Dr. Wall supposes, to the retired villas of the wealthy, with large domains around them; but to the costly tombs, and sepulchres, which they were accustomed to erect in solitary places. The pyramids of Egypt may be referred to.

15. *Who filled their houses with silver.*]—By 'houses' we are here, perhaps, to understand sepulchres, in which it was customary, in ancient times, to deposit much of the treasure, which the dead possessed when living.

18. *The oppressor.*]—'The task-master.' The account given of the treatment of the Christian slaves in Mequinez, is a lively comment on this passage. Their respective guardians, or task-masters, deliver them over at night, as so many sheep, to another; who is appointed to take charge of all. This man secures them in one house till next morning, and then they hear the doleful echo of 'come out to work.'—Account of South-West Barbary, p. 115.

19. *The servant.*]—That is, 'the slave.'

20. *Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery?*]—In other words, why is a wretched being suffered to come from his mother's womb, or to be born?

21. *Hid treasures.*]—See notes on Prov. ii. 4; and Is. xlv. 3.

23. *Whose way is hid.*]—Consequently, 'Who knows not whither to go, nor what to do.'

24. *For my sighing cometh before I eat.*]—Every time he sat down to his meals, we may suppose, he was particularly reminded of the loss of his children; and this would naturally aggravate his sorrows. Or, from his disease, eating might be attended with extreme pain.

24. *My roarings are poured out like the waters.*]—His groans and complaints resembled the murmuring sound of distant waterfalls. Some readers might wish, perhaps, that the

original would allow us to read, 'my tears are poured out like the waters;' that is, like the rain.

25. *The thing which I greatly feared.*]—Enjoying the utmost happiness and prosperity, the only fear, or apprehension which Job had, we may suppose, was a reverse of fortune.

26. *I was not in safety, &c.*]—The Vulgate, and the Chaldee paraphrase read this interrogatively; but the text appears more intelligible as it is. The meaning is, 'I did not consider myself in a state of safety; I was not inactive, nor careless, to avoid calamity, and yet it came.'

CHAP. IV. VER. 1. *Eliphaz the Temanite.*]—Eliphaz was the son of Esau, and Teman was the son of Eliphaz, Gen. xxxvi. 10, 11. The Eliphaz of Job was, without doubt, of this race. Teman is certainly a city of Idumæa: Jer. xlix. 7, 20; Ezek. xxv. 13; Amos i. 11, 12; Ob. 8, 9.

5. *But now it is come upon thee, &c.*]—The Hebrew word *הנה* here rendered by the particle 'now,' means 'calamity, sorrow,' &c. like *ατη* in Greek, which seems derived from it. This gives a proper nominative to the verb, and makes the sentence clear. See *Houbigant*.

6 *Is not this thy fear, &c.*]—Houbigant's translation is, 'Was not thy religion thy confidence; thy hope, the integrity of thy morals?' Dr. Waterland would read: 'Is this thy reverence, thy confidence, thy hope, and the integrity of thy ways?' Heath renders it, 'Is not thy fear, thy folly, thy hope, the integrity of thy way?' that is, 'does not thy fear proceed from some folly and wickedness of which thou hast been guilty; or, if thou art innocent, ought not thy hope to keep pace with thine integrity? for remember who ever perished,' &c.

10. *The roaring of the lion, &c.*]—Bp. Patrick's comment is, 'Though these tyrants and oppressors may be as fierce as lions, and as strong, yet their power is broken.' Perhaps the sacred writer only meant to illustrate the position of Eliphaz by the example of the lion; a fierce, voracious, and destructive animal, who is often hunted into toils, or destroyed in various ways, and who, in old age, is often doomed to perish with hunger.

10. *The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the fierce lion, &c.*]—By such metonymies it was usual to designate wicked, cruel, and rapacious men. See Ps. xxxiv. 10; lviii. 6.

10. *The fierce lion.*]—'The black lion.' So Bochart translates it, according to the import of the Hebrew word. Oppian tells us, that he himself saw lions of this color; and Pliny assures us, there were lions of this sort in Syria.

12. *Now a thing.*]—Rather, 'a word' of admonition and

reproof with reference to the vision, which immediately follows. The original is the common word רַבֵּר.

13. *In thoughts from the visions of the night.*]—In this and the three following verses we have one of the most awful descriptions that language is capable of giving. It is a night-piece, attended with circumstances of the deepest horror, and cannot be viewed without exciting the liveliest emotions. Obscurity is not unfavorable to the sublime. Though it render the object indistinct, the impression, however, may be great; for, as an ingenious author well observes, it is one thing to make an idea clear, and another to make it affecting to the imagination; and the imagination may be strongly affected, and in fact, often is so, by objects of which we have no clear conception. Thus we see, that almost all the descriptions given us of the appearances of supernatural beings carry some sublimity, though the conceptions which they afford us be confused and indistinct. Their sublimity arises from the ideas, which they always convey, of superior power and might, joined with an awful obscurity. We may see this fully exemplified in this noble passage of the book of Job.—*Dr. Blair.*

18. *Behold, he put no trust, &c.*]—This verse may be thus rendered; ‘He confided not in his servants as being infallible, and on his angels he has not conferred absolute perfection.’

19. *Which are crushed before the moth.*]—Some of the ancient versions read, ‘They shall be consumed as by a moth.’ It is probable, that this means a moth-worm, which is one state of the creature alluded to. It is first enclosed in an egg, from whence it issues a worm, and after a time becomes a complete insect, or moth. The following extracts from Niebuhr may throw light on this passage, that man is crushed by so feeble a thing as a worm. ‘A disease very common in Yemen is the attack of the Guinea-worm, or hair-worm.’ (See *Chambers’s Dict. Art. Dracunculi.*) This disease is supposed to be occasioned by the use of the putrid waters, which people are obliged to drink in several parts of Yemen; and for this reason the Arabians always pass water, with the nature of which they are unacquainted, through a linen cloth, before drinking it. When one unfortunately swallows any of the eggs of these insects, no immediate consequence follows; but after a considerable time, the worm begins to shew itself through the skin. Our physician, Mr. Cramer, was within a few days of his death, attacked by five of these worms at once, although this was more than five months after we had left Arabia. In the isle of Kerek, I saw a French officer named Le Page, who, after a long and difficult journey performed on foot, and in an

Indian dress, between Pondicherry and Surat, through the heart of India, was busy extracting a worm out of his body. He supposed that he had got it by drinking bad water in the country of the Marattas.

This disorder is not dangerous, if the person affected can extract the worm without breaking it. With this view it is rolled on a small bit of wood, as it comes out of the skin. It is slender as a thread, and two or three feet long. It gives no pain as it makes its way out of the body, unless what may be occasioned by the care which must be taken of it for some weeks. If, unluckily, it be broken, it then returns into the body, and the most disagreeable consequences ensue; palsy, gangrene, and sometimes death.—Companion to the Holy Bible, Expos. Index.

Perhaps the Hebrew expression *וְיִדְּבֹל*, means only 'like, or after the manner of, a moth;' an insect that is easily destroyed, and that will frequently fly into the flame and destroy itself.

21. *They die, even without wisdom.*—Rather, 'They shall die but not in wisdom;' i. e. without acquiring the benefits of experience, or forming any proper estimate of their condition in this present life. Perhaps it would be better to read this clause like the former, interrogatively, 'And shall they not die without wisdom?' It is so in the Chaldee paraphrase.

CHAP. V. VER. 1. *To which of the saints, &c.*—See the Introduction. Instead of 'wilt thou turn;' we may read, 'wilt thou appeal.' Some take the sentence affirmatively, thus; 'And appeal to some one of the saints.' See *Schultens*, and *Houbigant*.

2. *For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.*—The Hebrew word *טִיִּיל*, which we translate 'silly,' means one that is easily enticed, or persuaded to evil; and *חֲנֻפָּה*, instead of 'envy,' means rather 'indignation, jealousy, or zeal.' See the marginal reading. The sense of the passage is, 'That the fool brings himself to destruction by the indulgence of anger, and the credulous, or simple, by his outrageous zeal and violence.'

3. *I have seen the foolish, &c.*—'I saw the profligate taking root, but I marked him out for sudden destruction.' This is the same thought as in Ps. xxxvii. 35, 36, and drawn out at length, Ps. lxxiii. See *Heath* and *Schultens*.—*Dr. Dodd*.

The Septuagint version is, 'I saw the foolish throwing out their root; but immediately their habitation was destroyed.'

4. *And they are crushed in the gate.*—This expression means, that when they are brought before a court of judicature, they are found guilty and condemned. It has been already remarked,

that courts of justice were usually held over the gates of ancient cities.

4. *Neither is there any to deliver them.*—Some commentators are of opinion, that this means, ‘there is no advocate to plead their cause.’

5. *Whose harvest the hungry, &c.*—Houbigant’s translation of this verse is, ‘Moreover the hungry have devoured their harvest; armed men have taken away their corn; robbers have consumed their substance.’ So also the Vulgate, except in the last clause, which has, ‘And the thirsty shall drink up their riches.’ If the expression, ‘out of the thorns,’ may be considered as the right translation, we must understand by it, ‘Out of the fences made of thorns, which inclosed their corn, or harvest;’ or, that the harvest of the improvident is not worth reaping, but is left to the plunderer, who takes it out of the thorns and briars with which it is overgrown.

6, 7. *Although affliction cometh not, &c.*—The Hebrew is rather, ‘For iniquity cometh not forth out of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground;’ i. e. ‘As the wickedness of men does not proceed from any natural cause, but from their own free will; so neither are their miseries to be considered as the effects of natural causes, but as the distribution of a free agent likewise, who fits men’s punishments to their crimes: and, hence man, being prone to sin, is necessarily born to suffer.’

But this verse would be better rendered, agreeably to the interpretation given of the preceding; for then ‘man would be born to trouble as the sparks fly upward;’ that is, it would fall upon him naturally and necessarily, without any determination, or direction of a moral agent. He could neither prevent it by his piety, nor hasten it by his impiety. The last clause of this verse is literally in the Hebrew, ‘As the sons of the burning coal lift themselves up to fly.’ See the marginal reading. This agrees well with the sparks of fire, which naturally ascend, but not with the lightnings, as Schultens would read here; which dart down, and must descend to do execution.—*Peters.*

Houbigant and Heath, after some of the ancient versions, render this clause, ‘As the young eagles for soaring aloft.’—See, also, *Rosenmüller.*

Mr. Weston understands by ‘Affliction cometh not out of the dust,’ &c. ‘Sterility is not in the earth, when properly cultivated, nor does *labor* grow out of the ground; because man is born to *labor* as the sparks fly upwards.’—See Preface to the Sunday Lessons.

8. *I would seek unto God, &c.*]—Eliphaz advises Job to confess his sins, and, with humble submission, after imploring the mercies of God, to submit his case entirely to his righteous decision.

11. *To set up on high, &c.*]—Rather, ‘So that he setteth up on high those that are low, and those who mourn are exalted to safety.’

13. *Is carried headlong.*]—That is, ‘it falls to the ground;’ or ‘utterly fails.’

15. *He saveth the poor from the sword, from their mouth, &c.*]—Schultens imagines it should be read, ‘From the sword which proceeded out of his mouth;’ or ‘from the sword of their mouth;’ i. e. from the many evils which flow from the unbridled licence of the tongue. And this reading receives no small confirmation from Psalm lvii. 4, and lxiv. 3. See *Rosenmüller*. But Mr. Heath, by a slight alteration of the text, renders it, ‘He delivereth the desolate out of their mouth, and the poor from the hand of the mighty.’ Dr. Waterland translates the verse thus: ‘But he saveth the poor from destruction by their mouth, and from the hand of the mighty.’

16. *And iniquity.*]—That is, ‘And the iniquitous hold their tongue.’ It is the abstract used for the concrete.

23. *For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field.*]—It has been supposed that these words refer to a custom called ‘scopilism,’ which is thus described by Van Egmont and Heyman, (*Travels*, vol. ii. p. 156.) ‘In the province of Arabia, there is a crime called *σκοπιλισμος*, or fixing of stones; it being a frequent practice among them to place stones in the grounds of those with whom they are at variance, as a warning that any person who dares to till that field should infallibly be slain by the contrivance of those who placed the stones there.’ This malicious practice is thought to have had its origin in Arabia Petræa. See 2 Kings iii. 19, 25.

Perhaps the only thing meant by being ‘in league with the stones of the field,’ is, that unconscious, and inanimate as they are, they would not injure Job; and that he would sustain no more injury from destruction, famine, and the wild beasts of the earth, than they: for ‘to be in league,’ is to be associated with others in the same dangers, or to be in the same state of security and defence. See Isaiah xxviii. 15; and compare Ps. xci. 12.

24. *Thy habitation.*]—The word *בית* means the place where cattle are kept, as in a place of security from straying, and from the attacks of wild beasts.

24. *And shalt not sin.*]—Heath renders it, ‘And shalt not

be disappointed; i. e. shalt not fail in accomplishing the object of thy desire. So, also, Jarchi. Houbigant, without assigning any reason, reads, 'And shalt not be in want of any thing.'

27. *Lo this, we have searched.*]—Lo, this is the result of our inquiries.

CHAP. VI. VER. 2. *My calamity.*]—The Hebrew word here used, *רָעָה*, is not to be found in the Pentateuch, nor in the writings of the more ancient prophets. It may therefore seem, as Grotius remarks, to ascertain, in some measure, the period when this book was written. Houbigant renders it by 'iniquity.'

3. *My words are swallowed up.*]—That is, my words are totally inadequate to express my sorrow. So, equivalently, the Chaldee paraphrase. Or, excess of grief deprives me of the power of utterance. 'Vox faucibus hæsit.'—*Virg.*

4. *My spirit.*]—'My life.'

5. *Doth the wild ass bray when he hath grass?*]—Grass and fodder here are a figure of abundance and tranquillity, such as the friends of Job enjoyed. To bray and to low are to be considered as expressions of grief and uneasiness. Job therefore compares his friends to a wild ass, enjoying her food in silence, and to an ox perfectly satisfied with grateful pasture. Happy themselves, they condoled not with him in his wretchedness, nor sympathised with him in his sorrow; but rather blamed his mourning as importunate clamor, and as if he had behaved himself towards God with insolence and impatience.—See *Schultens*.

6. *Unsavoury.*]—Tasteless, of itself, or insipid.

6. *Is there any taste in the white of an egg?*]—There is great variety of interpretation with respect to these words. The Septuagint reads, 'Is there any taste or relish in vain words?' The Arabic version, 'in the juice of purslane?' St. Jerome's version is, 'Or can any one relish that which, when tasted, produces death?' He seems to have read, in the Hebrew copy from which he translated, *בְּרִית לָמוֹת*.—See *Poole's Synopsis*.

7. *The things that my soul refused, &c.*]—Such nauseous things as heretofore I loathed to touch, are now in my misery become my food. So the Vulgate. For a variety of other conjectural meanings, see *Rosenmüller's* prolix Scholia.

10. *For I have not concealed the words of the Holy One.*]—'For I dispute not the decrees of the Holy One.'—*Heath*.

11. *What is mine end?*]—Rather, 'What is likely to be mine end?'

13. *Is not my help in me, &c.*]—The Vulgate, and some of the other ancient versions, have not this verse in an interrogative form; and we may read it more intelligibly perhaps, ‘I have no help, or resource, within myself, and wisdom is quite driven from me.’ See *Rosenmüller*.

14. *To him that is afflicted, &c.*]—‘Should a man that is utterly undone be insulted by his friend? and should he tempt him to forsake the fear of the Almighty?’ *Heath*.

This clause plainly refers to chap. v. 1. The words of Eliphaz seem to have made a deep impression on Job, and he resents them extremely. Dr. Waterland renders the verse, ‘To one that is wasting away, pity might be shewn by his friend; but he lays aside,’ &c. *Rosenmüller*’s version is, ‘Humanity should be shewn to an afflicted man by his friend; otherwise, he (i. e. the friend) throws off the fear of God.’

15. *Deceitfully as a brook.*]—Rather, ‘as a torrent,’ or the channel, through which waters sometimes rush with great violence, and which is sometimes quite dry when water is most wanted. In a mountainous country, like Judea, such torrents, or glens, are very common.

16. *Blackish.*]—The meaning is, that they are turbid, and violent for a while, in consequence of the melting of the ice and the snow that covered them.

19. *The troops of Tema looked.*]—By a very slight alteration in the pointing, Mr. Heath so translates this verse as to introduce the speaker using an animated prosopopœia, or addressing himself to the travellers. ‘Look for them, ye troops of Tema; ye travellers of Sheba, expect them earnestly.’ This gives great life to the poetry, and sets a very beautiful image before the eye. The travellers, wasting their time, depended on those torrents for water; but when they come thither ‘they are dried up,’ ver. 20.

19. *Troops—companies.*]—These were the caravans that went from Arabia Felix with merchandise to Egypt. Their road lay through Arabia Petræa, Job’s country. The yearly caravan which goes from Grand Cairo to Mecca, near Arabia Felix, passes the same way.—*Scott*.

21. *For now ye are nothing.*]—Rather, ‘So, also, now ye are nothing.’ Job here addresses his pretended friends, and applies to them the simile of the torrents.

21. *And are afraid.*]—Lest I should apply to you for relief.

22, 23. *Bring unto me, &c.*]—He specifies these instances, as the severest trial of friendship. The Arabian poet professes his friendship in much the same language:

I fought for you against your enemies :

I was bound for you, if you were in debt,

And I redeemed you.

Anthologia, p. 577.

26. *Do ye imagine to reprove words, &c.*]—‘Do you devise speeches to insult me; and the words of him that is desperate, are they as the wind?’—*Heath*. A better, and at the same time a more literal translation of this verse may be, ‘Do ye imagine to reprove mere words? The speeches of one that is desperate, (like me) are as wind;’ i. e. quite uncontrollable. See ch. viii. 2.

27. *The fatherless.*]—Rather, ‘the destitute.’ One deprived, as Cocceius justly observes, of the blessing and protection of his Heavenly Father.

28. *For it is evident.*]—Rather, ‘For it will be evident.’

29. *Return, I pray you; let it not be iniquity, &c.*]—‘Recollect yourselves, I beseech you; call it not wickedness: nay, consider it yet again; righteousness may be in me.’—*Chappelow*.

30. *Is there iniquity in my tongue, &c.*]—‘Must there needs be perversity in my tongue, because my palate cannot relish misery?’—*Heath*. Or, rejecting the interrogative form, we may read, paraphrastically, and in connection with the last verse, ‘Consider whether there is any falshood, or iniquity, in my tongue; and whether my moral taste is so far depraved, that I can no longer distinguish ‘perverse things;’ or things that are contrary and opposite; such as truth and falshood, justice and iniquity, happiness and misery.’

CHAP. VII. VER. 1. *An appointed time.*]—Rather ‘a period of discipline and warfare for man on earth.’ See the marginal reading, and *Rosenmüller*.

2. *The shadow.*]—The shades of evening, when his toil ceases.

2. *A servant—an hireling.*]—These two terms should be joined, ‘an hireling servant,’ or ‘labouring man.’ He reasons from analogy: rest and wages are the justifiable desire of the wearied laborer; ease and death equally so of the miserable. The comparison is carried on farther, as the learned Schultens has observed.

3. *So am I made to possess months of vanity.*]—So it is my lot to endure months that disappoint my expectations; or months that pass away without any enjoyment.

4. *And the night be gone?*]—Rather, ‘And the night be measured out,’ agreeably to the marginal reading; in which there seems to be an allusion to the hour-glass, the most ancient contrivance, perhaps, for measuring time.

—5. This verse contains a general description of that loathsome disease called elephantiasis. Vid. *Aretæum*, lib. ii. c. 13.

6. *My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle.*]—Dr. Shaw, speaking of the eastern nations, says, 'The chief branch of their manufactures is the making of hykes, or blankets, as we should call them. The women alone are employed in this work (as Andromache and Penelope were of old); who do not use the shuttle, but conduct every thread of the woof with their fingers.'

If shuttles are not now used in the manufacturing of hykes, can we suppose that they were in use in the time of Job? Yet our translators suppose this; whereas the original only says, 'my days are swifter than a weaver's:' the motion of whose fingers must have been exceedingly quick, when no shuttle was used. It might be as quick as most motions the Temanites were familiarly acquainted with.—*Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 211.

Notwithstanding this note of Harmer, few readers of taste will be disposed to give up our present translation. 'Shuttle' is supplied by Montanus, and might have been originally in the text; not to mention that the Hebrew term, שרר, may imply it.

7. *O remember, &c.*]—An apostrophe to the Supreme Being, which is continued to the end of the chapter.

7. *My life is wind.*]—'My life is but empty breath.'—*Houbigant*.

8. *Thine eyes are upon me, and I am not.*]—And when thine eyes shall be mercifully directed towards me, in order to relieve me from my sufferings, I shall be no more. See ver. 21.

12. *Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou settest a watch over me?*]—Crocodiles are objects of great terror to the inhabitants of Egypt; when therefore they appear, they watch them with much attention, and take proper precautions to secure them; so that they should not be able to avoid the weapons that are afterwards used to kill them. To these watchings, and those deadly after-assaults, I apprehend Job refers, when he says, 'am I a whale,' (but a crocodile no doubt is what is meant there) 'that thou settest a watch over me?'

Different methods, says Maillet, are used to take crocodiles, some of which are very singular; the most common is, to dig deep ditches along the Nile, which are covered with straw, and into which the crocodile may probably tumble. Sometimes they catch them with hooks, baited with a quarter of a pig, or with some bacon, of which they are very fond. Some hide themselves in the places, which they know to be frequented by this creature, and lay snares for him. Lett. ix. p. 32.—*Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 536.

Houbigant, by a slight alteration, reads, 'Am I a sea, or a whale, that thou raisest a tempest against me?' But the change

is not necessary. The sea in this passage is mentioned as an object of greater power, terror, and alarm, than the crocodile, or any other creature.

15. *Strangling.*]—The suffocation, which sometimes attended the disease with which he was afflicted. Vid. Aretæum, ubi supra.

15. *My life.*]—Rather, ‘My bones.’ These were nearly all that his disease would leave. See the marginal reading.

16. *I loath it.*]—The Hebrew verb may be derived from מָקָה, and mean, ‘I am wasting away.’

17. *What is man, &c.*]—Schultens would read, ‘What is mortal man, that thou shouldest contend with him, and that thou shouldest set thy heart against him?’

19. *How long wilt thou not depart from me?*]—Literally, ‘How long wilt thou not take thine eyes off me?’ This is a metaphor borrowed from combatants, who never take their eyes off their antagonists.

19. *Let me alone till I swallow down my spittle.*]—This is a proverb among the Arabians to the present day, by which they understand, ‘Give me leave to rest a little, after my fatigue.’ This is the favor which Job complains is not granted to him. There are two instances which illustrate this passage (quoted by Schultens), in Hariri’s Narratives, entitled ‘The Assembly.’ One is of a person, who, when eagerly pressed to give an account of his travels, answered with impatience, ‘Let me swallow down my spittle, for my journey has fatigued me.’ The other instance is of a quick return made to one who used that proverb; ‘Suffer me’ (said the person importuned) ‘to swallow down my spittle;’ to which his friend replied, ‘You may if you please swallow down even Tigris and Euphrates;’ that is, take what time you please.—Biblical Researches, vol. i. p. 84.

20. *O thou preserver of men.*]—Rather, ‘O thou observer of men.’ The character of God as the ‘preserver of men,’ has no propriety here, where he is represented as an avenger of sin.’ The former part of this verse may be rendered, hypothetically, thus; ‘If I have sinned, what shall I do,’ &c.

21. *Why dost thou not pardon my transgression?*]—Or, so far mitigate the punishment of it, that I may quit this loathsome habitation of clay. For, didst thou not support me under these afflictions, I should, even before morning, take up my habitation in the grave.—Bp. Patrick.

21. *For now.*]—That is, ‘For, in a very short time.’

CHAP. VIII. VER. 1. *Bildad the Shuhite.*]—Shuah was one of the sons of Abraham by Keturah, whose posterity was num-

bered among the people of the East; and his situation was probably contiguous to that of his brother, Midian, and of his nephews, Sheba and Dedan. See Gen. xxv. 2 and 3. Dedan is a city of Idumæa, Jer. xlix. 8, and seems to have been situated on the eastern side, as Teman was on the west, Ezek. xxv. 13. From Sheba originated the Sabæans, in the passage from Arabia Felix to the Red Sea. Sheba is united to Midian, Isa. lx. 6. It is in the same region, however, with Midian, and not far from Mount Horeb.

2. *How long shall the words of thy mouth be like a strong wind?*—Bildad compares the words of Job to a strong wind, by which he marks the vehemence and impetuosity with which, according to his judgment, they burst forth against the righteous decisions of God. The following turgid passage in Silius Italicus will serve to illustrate this form of expression:

—Qui tanta superbo
Facta sonas ore, et spumanti turbine perflas
Ignorantium aures.—LIB. XI. VER. 581.

‘With haughty mouth you speak such swelling deeds,
And with a foaming whirlwind fill the ears
Of vulgar men.’

6. *He would awake for thee.*—‘He would watch over thee,’ for good.

6. *The habitation of thy righteousness.*—An Hebraism for ‘thy righteous habitation.’

12. *It withereth.*—That is, if it be not supplied with water, agreeably to the hypothesis of the preceding verse. See *Rosenmüller*.

13. *The hypocrite’s.*—‘The profligate man’s.’ So Heath renders it. I cannot find that the Hebrew word, *הַיָּצִיט*, ever signifies ‘a hypocrite.’ It is here coupled with ‘forgetfulness of God,’ which is a scriptural phrase for impiety. It means evidently an oppressive ruler, chap. xxxiv. 30; and a profane scoffer, Ps. xxxv. 16. Our translators render the abstract substantive by ‘profaneness,’ Jer. xxiii. 15, where it imports a contempt of the divine threatenings, and confidence in committing the most immoral actions.—*Scott*. See, also, the margin of *Ar. Montanus*, and *Houbigant’s* version.

15. *His house.*—This may comprise all his worldly comforts and possessions, on which he chiefly relies for happiness.

17. *His roots are wrapped about the heap.*—Houbigant, by a slight alteration, reads, ‘He has his roots fixed in an hill;’ and by the expression, ‘He seeth the place of stones,’ (as it should have been rendered) may be meant, that his roots pene-

trate so far into the earth, that they reach the rocks, which lie beneath its surface, and then perish.

18. *If he destroy.*]—The antecedent to the pronoun ‘he,’ must be ‘God,’ understood; unless we take the sentence impersonally, and read, ‘If he be destroyed,’ &c.

19. *Behold, this is the joy of his way,* &c.]—Heath would read, ‘Behold him now: destruction is his path, and strangers shall spring up out of the path in his room.’ But it is better to continue the metaphor, and understand by ‘others,’ other plants, or trees.

21. *Till he fill,* &c.]—Rather, ‘But will fill,’ &c. The declaration in this verse is founded on the supposition of Job’s innocence and integrity.

CHAP. IX. VER. 2. *With God.*]—That is, ‘before God;’ or ‘in the estimation of God.’

3. *He cannot answer him one of a thousand.*]—That is, ‘He will not be able to answer satisfactorily, or to justify himself, above once in a thousand cases of omission and transgression, that may be brought against him.’

5. *Which.*]—We should now use the relative pronoun ‘Who,’ at the beginning of these verses.

5. *Which removeth the mountains,* &c.]—This and the following verses are manifestly a description of an earthquake. During the terrible earthquake in Jamaica, 1692, the mountains were split: they leaped, they moved, they fell with prodigiously loud noises, and were thrown on heaps. In the great earthquake in the island of Sicily, in 1693, which destroyed above sixty thousand inhabitants, rocks were loosened and thrown down: two very high rocks, in particular, near Ibla, with all the trees growing upon them, were, by the violence of the fall, quite inverted, so that their tops stood upon the ground.—*Scott.*

7. *Which commandeth the sun,* &c.]—Bp. Warburton supposes, that this alludes to the miraculous history of the people of God; such as the Egyptian darkness, and the stopping of the sun’s course by Joshua. But surely, there is no necessity, from the words themselves, to suppose any allusion of this kind, or indeed any thing miraculous; since God, by throwing a cloud over the sun and stars, can, and does obscure them when he pleases; and thus it is that the Chaldee paraphrast understands it: ‘And seals up the stars with clouds:’ or if we take Bp. Patrick’s exposition, it is, ‘That the heavens are subject to the power of God, and neither sun nor stars can shine if he forbid it.’ There is a beautiful fragment of Pindar preserved by Clemens Alexandrinus; where he gives

it as an instance of the 'power of God,' that he can, when he will, cause the pure light to spring out of thick darkness, or cover with a gloomy cloud the clear lustre of the day. There is just as much authority to say, that Pindar had the story of Joshua, or the Egyptian darkness, in his thoughts, as the writer of the book of Job had.—*Dr. Dodd.*

7. *It riseth not.*]—Or, 'it shineth not.' It is the same word that is used 2 Kings iii. 22. 'And the sun shone upon the water.' The disappearing of the sun, moon, and stars, by reason of the thickness of the air, is a circumstance mentioned in the account of the eruption of mount *Ætna* in the year 1766.—*See Scott.*

8. *And treadeth upon the waves of the sea.*]—Heath, following the reading of the Hebrew, found in a correct copy, agrees with Houbigant in rendering this, 'Who treadeth on the heights of the clouds;' which, as he justly observes, makes a more elegant image. See the marginal reading, and compare ch. xxii. 14; Isai. xiv. 14.

9. *Arcturus.*]—The Hebrew word *אֲרְכֻשׁ*, according to Bochart, Michaelis, and others, is derived from an Arabic word signifying 'a bier;' for the four stars in the Great Bear, which nearly form a square, instead of a wain, or waggon, are called by the Arabic astronomers 'the bier,' or 'sarcophagus,' in which the dead body is carried out to be buried; and the three stars which correspond with what we call the tail of the Bear, or the horses of Charles's Wain, they consider as the sons, or daughters of the deceased, who attend the funeral. It has been judiciously observed, also, by Drusius and others, that the present tense, 'which maketh,' is here used in preference to the past; because the sacred writer intimates that God from day to day, and year to year, causes the stars to rise and set in their proper seasons; and that the order of nature, together with the various revolutions of the heavenly bodies, are governed by him, and depend entirely on his sovereign will. *Arcturus* rises in the beginning of September, at which time the year commenced with all the ancient eastern nations. See *Rosenmüller.*

9. *Orion.*]—The name of this constellation in Hebrew is *כֶּסֶל*, *Cesil*. It rises in the beginning of winter, and continues above the horizon till the spring. The Hebrew word seems to denote the unsettled state of the weather, and the great changes, which, in all climates, were supposed to attend this constellation.

9. *Pleiades.*]—The Hebrew word is *כִּימָה*. It is probable that, as this word is supposed to convey the idea of the genial heat, which warms and ripens the fruits of the earth, it is rightly

rendered by 'the Pleiades.' Besides, as Piscator observes, the sacred writer having mentioned one constellation which introduced autumn, and another which rises in the beginning of winter, it was natural, in noticing a third, to name that which appears above the horizon, at the commencement of the spring season.

9. *The chambers of the south.*—By 'the chambers of the south,' we are to understand in this passage the great number of constellations, that are dispersed throughout the southern hemisphere; and, among others, the dog-star, which rises about the beginning of summer. Thus, the four seasons of the year are distinguished by their respective constellations, as mentioned, or alluded to, in this verse.

11. *He goeth by me, and I see him not; he, &c.*—A poetical representation of God's infinite power, shewing that its agency far exceeds the comprehension of the human mind.

13. *If God, &c.*—Rather, 'God will not withdraw his anger,' from those who resist his sovereign will and power, understood. By 'the proud helpers' are meant men who vainly rely on their own strength and resources. See the marginal reading.

14. *How much less shall I answer.*—'If God possesses such sovereign power as to remove mountains, &c. (See ver. 5—10.) how can I presume to enter into any contest, or justification of myself before him?'

16—18. *If I had called, and he had answered, &c.*—'But if I should call, that he might answer me, I could not easily believe that he would hear my voice, since he hath broken me with a tempest, and inflicted many wounds upon me without cause; nor hath given me space to take my breath, he so hath filled me with bitterness.'—*Houbigant.*

This version shews the connection, and seems to give the true sense of the passage.—See *Bp. Lowth's Prælectiones*, p. 455, 8vo.

18. *He will not suffer me to take my breath.*—Dr. Gill is of opinion, that there is an allusion in these words to the hot, burning winds, which prevail in the eastern countries; and which sometimes blow so strong, as almost to take away a man's breath. Thevenot (*Travels*, part i. b. l. c. 34.) reports that between Suez and Cairo he and his companions had for the space of a day and more so hot a wind, that they were forced to turn their backs in order to breathe.

A better interpretation is, 'He will not grant the shortest intermission of my sufferings.' 'To take breath,' is still a proverbial expression signifying to rest, or pause, for a short time.

19. *Who shall set me a time to plead?*]—By a slight alteration, Houbigant reads, ‘Who shall give evidence in my favor?’ This is more intelligible, and connects the sense with the following verse.

21. *Though I were perfect, &c.*]—The Septuagint has a very different reading; ‘If I have been guilty of impiety, I was not conscious of it; but yet my life,’ or ‘the enjoyment of life,’ is taken from me.’

Taking the Hebrew futures as aorists we may render, ‘Though perfect, I trust not to the consciousness of my own soul. In this state of suffering and ignorance, I despise life.’

22. *This is one thing, &c.*]—‘It is one and the same thing, whether I am innocent or guilty; therefore I said, He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.’

23. *The scourge.*]—By ‘the scourge’ we may understand some natural cause of great and national calamity; such as the hot, suffocating wind called the simoom, pestilence, famine, and earthquake. The words may be in the optative mood, ‘Oh, that some scourge would slay me suddenly! but He laughs at the trial of the innocent.’

24. *The earth.*]—Meaning this world and its concerns.

24. *He covereth the faces of the judges.*]—That is, he convicts those of guilt, who presume to pass judgment on the transgressions of others. The expression in this verse may allude to the ancient custom of covering the faces of criminals. See note on Esther, chap. vii. 8.

Otherwise, the expression means, ‘He blinds the judges, so that they cannot perceive right from wrong, nor administer justice with impartiality.’

25. *My days are swifter than a post.*]—The common pace of travelling in the East is very slow. Camels go little more than two miles an hour. Those who carried messages in haste move very differently. Dromedaries, a sort of camel, which is exceedingly swift, are used for this purpose; and Lady M. W. Montague asserts, that they far outrun the swiftest horses. (Let. ii. 65.) There are also messengers, who run on foot, and who sometimes go an hundred and fifty miles in less than twenty-four hours. With what energy then might Job say, ‘my days are swifter than a post!’ Instead of passing away with a slowness of motion, like that of a caravan, my days of prosperity have disappeared with a swiftness like that of a messenger carrying dispatches.—*Burder*, vol. i. p. 101.

29. *Why then labour I in vain?*]—‘To justify myself,’ understood.

33. *Days-man.*]—An obsolete expression used by Spenser,

and other ancient writers, to signify an umpire, or an arbitrator between two parties. See the marginal reading.

34. *Let not his fear terrify me.*]—Rather, ‘Let not his arm, or his power, terrify me.’ The Hebrew word is **תַּמַּח**.

CHAP. X. VER. 1. *My soul is weary of my life, &c.*]—‘My soul is disgusted: whilst I live, I will let loose my sad thoughts on myself.’—Bp. Stock.

4. *Hast thou eyes of flesh?*]—Schultens remarks, that eyes of flesh here signify ‘eyes of envy and hatred.’ The interrogation is equivalent to, ‘Art thou subject to the errors, the passions, and infirmities of human nature?’

7. *I am not wicked.*]—Rather, ‘Not impious, nor guilty of flagitious crimes.’

10. *Hast thou not poured me out as milk, &c.*]—An allusion to the first formation of the foetus in the womb, from the semen virile, and to its growth afterwards. Pliny speaks of it in nearly the same terms, Nat. Hist. lib. vii. c. 15. See, also, Ovid, Met. Lib. xv. 216. This and the following verses are happily elucidated by Scheuchzer, Phys. Sacr. tom. vi. p. 39.

12. *Thou hast granted.*]—The verbs in this verse should have been in the preterimperfect tense, ‘Thou didst grant me,’ &c.

12. *Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit.*]—Rather, ‘Thy constant care, or thy watchful providence, preserved my soul.’

13, 14. *And these things hast thou hid in thine heart, &c.*]—Rather, ‘And all the while didst thou treasure up these things in thy heart.’ The sense is, I find by experience, that this was thy purpose; that if I should sin, thou wouldst observe me, and wouldest by no means acquit me of mine iniquity.

13. *This is with thee.*]—This forms one of the secret decrees of thy providence.

15. *See thou mine affliction.*]—‘Look upon it with pity, and compassion.’ Rosenmüller would render the original, ‘I see, or am fully sensible of my misery.’

17. *Witnesses.*]—Rather, ‘charges,’ or ‘accusations.’

17. *Changes and war are against me.*]—The word rendered ‘changes,’ is a military term, importing the leading on of fresh troops to the attack, to relieve those who are fatigued. Heath renders this clause, ‘Thou devisest an army of new torments to afflict me.’

22. *Without any order, &c.*]—‘Where there is no succession of day and night, but one perpetual night.’—Bp. Patrick, after Olympiodorus.

CHAP. XI. VER. 1. *Zophar the Naamathite.*]—Among the cities, which by lot fell to the tribe of Judah, in the neighbour-

hood of Idumæa, Naamah is enumerated, Josh. xv. 41; but this name does not occur elsewhere. It was probably the native place, or residence of Zophar.

4. *My doctrine is pure.*—Rather, ‘my conscience,’ my principles, or ‘my conduct;’ for Job had not said any thing with respect to the purity of his doctrine. The Septuagint has ‘my works.’ The Hebrew לִקְהָ is derived from an Arabic word signifying ‘the mind.’

6. *The secrets of wisdom.*—The subject treated here, and to the end of ver. 12, is divine punishments. By ‘wisdom,’ therefore, I understand the counsels of God, that fix the kind and measure of his punishments: by ‘the secrets of wisdom,’ his punishments in a future world, which are a secret to us at present. Those future punishments are declared to be ‘double to that which is:’ that is, they are far more severe and terrible than any sufferings of sinners in the present state. Hence, he would have Job learn, that what he now suffered was less than his iniquity deserved.—*Scott.*

Bp. Hall thinks the meaning is, ‘In strict justice, God might inflict on thee double of what thou now sufferest.’

8. *It is as high as heaven.*—What is the antecedent to the pronoun ‘it?’ Bp. Stock observes that the particle הִנֵּה, ‘behold,’ is here understood, and reads,

See the heights of heaven, what canst thou do?
See a deep below hell, what canst thou know?

Houbigant supplies the pronoun ‘he’ at the beginning of this verse, and in verse 9 reads, ‘The measure of him;’ that is, God; which gives the best, perhaps, and the most natural interpretation of this text.

11, 12. *Will he not then consider it? For vain man, &c.*—It is difficult to perceive the connection, as these verses are rendered in our translation. Perhaps we may read, ‘Will he not then consider it, or attend to it, that vain man might be wise, though he were born like a wild ass’s colt?’ Schultens observes, that ‘Let the wild ass’s colt be born a man,’ is an Arabian proverb, which they explain by saying, ‘Let a man that is untractable, wild, and fierce, become docile, gentle, and humane.’ The original יוֹלֵד, ‘may be born,’ signifies also, ‘may be rendered,’ or, ‘may become.’ Scott translates it,

That the proud may be made wise,
And the colt of the wild ass become a man.

15. *Shalt thou lift up thy face, &c.*—He describes the happy change of his condition, by its effects on his countenance;

contrasting his present dejected face, sullied and disfigured by terror, grief, and tears, with the look which he shall then assume, erect, firm, and clear as the polished mirror. He refers, perhaps, to those words, 'If I be righteous, yet will I not lift up my head,' ch. x. 15.—*Scott*.

17. *And thine age, &c.*]—This period will become clearer in the following disposition and translation:

And a happy age shall arise;
Thou shalt be as the morning,
Thou shalt blaze out more than noon.

The meaning is, 'Thy afflictions shall be succeeded by a state of durable felicity. Its beginning shall be as the morning of a bright day; it shall increase as the light, until it arrives to its highest point; when it shall exceed the lustre of the sun at noon.' The thought is the same, but far more nobly expressed, with that of Bildad, chap. viii. 7. Compare Prov. iv. 18.—*Id.*

By *גלגל*, 'age,' is meant 'the remainder of Job's life.' See *Rosénmüller*.

18. *Thou shalt dig.*]—Either for water, without interruption; or for the purpose of forming a moat, or rampart, round his dwelling. Another interpretation may be offered; for, 'to dig' may signify to cultivate the land, and peaceably enjoy its fruits.

20. *But the eyes of the wicked, &c.*]—Having described the happiness and security of Job, the speaker contrasts his condition with that of the wicked, whose eyes are represented as failing them, in consequence of watching against those dangers and calamities, from which he was shielded, but without being able to avoid them.

The eyes are said, in scripture language, 'to fail,' when we have no longer any hope of acquiring what we once looked at with all the eagerness of desire.

Instead of 'And they shall not escape,' we should read, 'But they shall not escape.' The *ו* 'but,' at the beginning of this verse, might have been rendered by 'whereas.'

20. *Their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost.*]—That is, 'They shall have no more hopes of happiness, than the last gasp of the dying man affords of life.'

CHAP. XII. VER. 2. *Ye are the people.*]—This is ironically spoken; as if he had said, 'Certainly, you are the only people worth listening to, and when you die, wisdom shall be no more.'

3. *Such things as these?*]—'Such common-place things as you have just been uttering?'

4. *Who calleth upon God, and he answereth him.*]—This clause should be rendered, as Scott justly observes, 'He calleth to

God, and let Him answer him.' Job repeats this as an instance of the derision, which he had experienced from his friends. Eliphaz had insulted him by saying, ch. v. i. 'Call now, if there be any that will answer thee; and to which of the saints wilt thou turn?' And Zophar had just uttered this bitter invective against him, 'Oh, that God would speak, and open his lips against thee!' chap. xi. 5. sneering at him for his appeal to God, chap. x. 2.

5. *He that is ready to slip with his feet.*]—That is, 'The man who is about to fall, or who is near his ruin, is as a lamp,' &c.

5. *A lamp despised.*]—This may mean the cheap, common, twinkling light, which the poor were obliged to use; and which was not sufficiently brilliant to invite any one to the habitation of festivity and joy. See note on chap. xviii. 5; and xxi. 17. Or else a lamp that was extinguished and broken.

6. *Prosper.*]—Rather 'abound with all manner of good things.'

9. *Who knoweth, &c.*]—'Who is there that does not recognise the wisdom and power of God in all these?'

12. *With the ancient.*]—'With the aged' in the plural number.

13. *With him is wisdom.*]—That is, 'With God;' who not only has wisdom, and that in an infinite degree, but also power united with it. He also possesses not only understanding; but a fixed plan by which it is regulated: for this is what seems to be implied by *חָזָן*, here rendered 'counsel.' See ver. 16.

15. *They overturn the earth.*]—Rather, overspread the earth, rendering it desolate instead of fruitful. Perhaps this is an allusion to an extensive inundation of the Nile, when more water is poured on the fields than can be drained off by the canals.

16. *Are his.*]—Are within the reach of his wisdom and power, and perform their parts in subservience to the dispensations of his providence.

17. *Spoiled.*]—That is, deprived of their dignity and power. 'Counsellors' and 'judges' are terms that seem used here, and in other passages, for persons of rank and condition; because, in the absolute monarchies of the East, there are no hereditary titles of nobility.

18. *He looseth the bond of kings.*]—That is, he dissolves their authority; or destroys that power by which they are accustomed to bind others. Scott very properly observes, that the expression may allude to the royal belt, which was highly ornamented, and was one of the insignia of majesty.

20. *He removeth away the speech of the trusty, &c.*]—Mr.

Heath derives the Hebrew word נאמני, which we render 'trusty,' from נאן, 'to speak, pronounce,' &c. Admitting this derivation to be right, we may read, 'He takes away the eloquence of orators.' Or, as Scott versifies it,

He strikes the patriot dumb; in vex'd debate,
Confounds the hoary sages of the state.

22. *He discovereth, &c.*]—The sentiment is, that while these terrible revolutions remain in the divine counsels, they are darkness, utter darkness to us; or deep, impenetrable secrets; and when they are discovered in the execution, they astonish and terrify mankind, as though sepulchral darkness covered the face of the earth. The prophet Daniel speaks in like figurative language of the counsels of God, relating to the four great empires of the world, chap. ii. 21, 22.—*Scott.*

24. *He taketh away the heart.*]—This expression means, to deprive of wisdom, as well as of feeling and courage.

24. *The chief of the people of the earth.*]—Rather, the princes of the earth, or the leaders of different nations.

24. *In a wilderness.*]—The Hebrew word is תהו, and is the same that is used in Genesis for 'chaos.' It would have been more accurate, therefore, to have said, that 'He causeth them to wander in the midst of chaos, or in a state of utter confusion.'

CHAP. XIII. VER. 1, 2. *Lo, mine eye, &c.*]—These two verses, as Scott observes, ought not to have been disjoined from the former chapter, as they authenticate the facts alleged there.

4. *Ye are forgers of lies.*]—Rather, 'Ye are varnishers of falsehoods.' The Chaldee verb, from which שפלי is derived, signifies 'to plaster,' or 'cover over.'

5. *It should be your wisdom.*]—'That would be some proof of wisdom on your parts.' So, Prov. xvii. 28, 'Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise.'

7, 8. *Will ye speak wickedly, &c.*]—They 'spoke wickedly for God,' that is, in vindication of him; because, to justify him, they were unjust to their friend; to save the honor of Providence, they condemned an innocent man. They 'talked deceitfully for God;' because they cunningly kept out of sight the truths that made against their own cause; namely, that many very wicked men prosper throughout life, and that many innocent persons perish with the wicked in general calamities. Thus they were partial to God; or 'they accepted his person,' as it is expressed in the text. See *Scott*, and *Rosenmüller*.

9. *Is it good, &c.*]—‘Is it right for you to offer adulation to him?’—*Houbigant*.

The verb *התל* means, to deceive by flattering speeches; and it resembles in sound our English word ‘wheedle,’ says Bp. Stock, so much, that I should conceive the one to be the parent of the other.

12. *Your remembrances are like unto ashes.*]—Rather, ‘your memorable sayings;’ or whatever else you deem worth notice; your riches, power, honors, &c. Heath renders it interrogatively, ‘Are not your lessons empty proverbs?’ &c.—Instead of ‘bodies,’ the Hebrew word *גוֹלִים* may signify, according to Buxtorf, Crinsoz, Heath, and others, ‘Your high-flown speeches, or pompous harangues.’ But it is better to understand it as applicable to the human frame. Eliphaz had already mentioned (ch. iv. 19) ‘them that dwell in houses of clay.’ The verse is translated with elegance and spirit by Scott:

What are your boasted maxims? What your heap
Of swelling promises? I hold them cheap:
Light as the dust before the rising gale;
Molehills of sand, as worthless and as frail.

14. *Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, &c.*]—These are proverbial expressions; the former denoting ‘I am my own tormentor;’ and the latter, ‘I expose myself to imminent danger.’ See note on Judges xii. 3, and the parallel text. Schultens and Rosenmüller read this verse affirmatively, and in the future tense, connecting it with the last clause of ver. 13, thus: ‘Let come on me what will, I will take my flesh,’ &c.

15. *I will maintain mine own ways.*]—I will vindicate my own principles and conduct.

16. *He also shall be my salvation.*]—Mr. Crinsoz remarks, that ‘salvation’ here signifies the deliverance, or acquittal of an accused person, whose innocence is acknowledged by his judge. Nothing but conscious integrity, and the most exalted sentiments of the divine justice, could give birth to this noble confidence. Our admirable poet has the art of sustaining the pious character of his chief personage, in the midst of the most daring excesses. Instead of ‘for an hypocrite,’ &c. we should read ‘but,’ or ‘whereas an hypocrite,’ &c.

18. *Justified.*]—That is, ‘acquitted.’

21. *Let not thy dread.*]—Rather, ‘Let not thine arm.’ See note on chap. ix. 34. The genius of Eastern poetry makes

two things of an action properly one; because two members of the body are spoken of as effecting it, the hand and the arm.—*Bp. Stock.*

24. *Wherefore hidest thou thy face, &c.*—As to reveal, or shew the light of his countenance, when applied to God, is considered a mark of his divine favor and protection; so ‘to hide his face’ must signify the contrary, or be a proof of his displeasure.

25. *Wilt thou break, &c.*—Here Job alleges the disproportion of the punishment to his faults. He was conscious of no sins, but those which are connected with the follies of youth. He imagined that he was now suffering for those inadvertencies; which he thinks extremely severe, as his youth had been passed, for the most part, in a course of virtue. See chap. xxxi. 16 to 18.

26. *And makest me to possess.*—That is, ‘as an inheritance.’—See *Rosenmüller.*

27. *In the stocks, &c.*—The expressions in this verse appear to be derived from the manner of treating slaves in ancient times. The punishment for those who ran away was, to put clogs on their feet, when apprehended, with the owner’s mark, that they might be deterred from committing the same offence in future, or that they might be easily traced and found. The concluding clause of this verse seems to countenance the opinion, that fugitive slaves and malefactors had the soles of their feet branded with the initial letters of their crimes; or that they had something permanently fastened to their feet, which rendered it easy for their masters to trace them, if they attempted to run away.

28. *He, as a rotten thing, &c.*—Job himself is here the subject of comparison; and such changes of the person are not uncommon in the sacred poetry of the Hebrews. The usage also of the third person for the first, sometimes occurs in the tragedies of Sophocles; ‘this man,’ for instance, is used for ‘I,’ and ‘me,’ as the learned Schultens has observed. Gray, Chappelow, and Heath, would transpose this verse, and place it after the second of the following chapter.

CHAP. XIV. VER. 4. *Who can bring, &c.*—He now pleads for lenity, on account of the natural weakness of man’s moral powers. Imperfection is entailed on man from his birth; can such a creature be without failures?—*Scott.*

6. *Turn from him.*—Some expositors are of opinion, that this is a metaphorical expression taken from the combat of gladiators, who always kept their eye fixed on their antagonist. But it seems to mean no more, in this place, than a petition,

that God would turn away his anger from him, and let him be at rest. The idea is, that having finished his labors, he may, like a hired servant, enjoy the blessing of repose after fatigue.

7—12. *For there is hope, &c.*]—He enforceth his petition for ease (ver. 6.) by another consideration: There is no coming back from the grave into this world, to enjoy a second life, whose felicity might make amends for the misery and infamy, which he now suffered. That this is his meaning, appears by the illustration that is used. If a tree, says he, be cut down to the ground, it will spring again from its root. Where? On the very spot on which it grew before. It is not so with man when he dieth. If also a pool, or lake, which feedeth some river, be by any accident dried up, the waters will, indeed, continue to exist somewhere, but they will run no more in their former channel; so it is with man, when he disappeareth from this world, into which he will never return.—*Scott.*

This sentiment has been embellished by several authors. Thus, Moschus on the death of Bion, as translated by Fawkes:

Alas! the meanest flow'rs which gardens yield,
The vilest weeds that flourish in the field,
Which dead in wintry sepulchres appear,
Revive in spring, and bloom another year:
But we, the great, the brave, the learn'd, the wise,
Soon as the hand of death has clos'd our eyes,
In tombs forgotten lie; no suns restore;
We sleep, for ever sleep, to wake no more.

9. *Through the scent of water, &c.*]—The sense of smelling is here poetically ascribed to the root of a tree. The meaning evidently is, 'when it feels the effect of water, it will bud,' &c.

13. *That thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me.*]—'That thou wouldest appoint some period for my sufferings, and then, remembering what I have endured, mercifully restore me to happiness!'

15. *Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.*]—That is, 'Thou wilt feel some paternal affection and compassion for a creature of thy own producing.'

17. *Sealed up in a bag.*]—The money that is collected together in the treasures of eastern princes, is told up in certain equal sums, and put into bags and sealed. (Sir J. Chardin.) These are what, in some parts of the Levant, are called 'purses,' where they reckon great expenses by so many purses. The money collected in the temple in the time of Joash, for its reparation, seems in like manner to have been told up in bags of

equal value, and was probably delivered sealed to those who paid the workmen. (2 Kings xii. 10.) If Job alludes to this custom, it should seem that he considered his offences as reckoned by God to be very numerous, and not suffered to be lost through inattention; since only considerable sums are kept in this manner.—See *Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 515, 516.

18, 19. *And surely, &c.*]—Here is an abrupt transition to other subjects, after the manner of the Arabian poets. Job seems to pass from his own particular afflictions to the calamitous state of the world in general; instancing earthquakes, inundations, and the waste of mankind by death, all which he considers as effects of the wrath of God against the sins of men.

These two verses are better rendered by Bp. Stock: ‘Perchance the fallen mountain may wear away, and the rock be removed from its place; waters may grind down stones, and the dust of the earth overwhelm its produce; so the hope of man dost thou cause to perish.’ So, also, Rosenmüller. Scott does not think that any simile is intended, and understands the last clause in the 19th verse as applied to what is poetically called, ‘the hope of the husbandman;’ the fruits of the earth, whether in the vineyard, or in the field.

20. *Thou changest, &c.*]—Too often we behold, with a sigh, this funeral presage in the altered looks of our friends, and beloved relations.

22. *But his flesh, &c.*]—‘But over him his flesh doth grieve, and his affection mourneth over him.’ Where, by ‘his flesh,’ we may understand his own children; and, by ‘his affection,’ the objects of his former love. These are represented as mourning over their drooping, aged parent, who has outlived his faculties.

Scott offers a different interpretation. As the two foregoing verses spoke of man departed into another world, it is most natural to understand this verse as relating to the same subject. According to the following translation, which the original will allow, we are presented with a tragical picture of man’s condition in the grave:

But over him his flesh shall grieve,
And over him his breath shall mourn.

In the daring spirit of oriental poetry, ‘the flesh,’ or body, and ‘the breath,’ are made conscious beings; the former lamenting its putrefaction in the grave, the latter mourning over the mouldering clay which it once enlivened.

CHAP. XV. VER. 2. *The east wind.*]—The allusion, perhaps,

is to the dry and blasting wind, called *sirocco*, which is extremely pernicious. Instead of 'belly' we should now say 'lungs.' Should a man be permitted, without reproof, to utter words as mischievous and pestilential in their tendency as the blasts that blow from the east?

4. *Yea, thou castest off fear, &c.*]—He taxes Job's doctrine of an unequal Providence with impiety. It tended, he says, to subvert religion, by confounding all distinction of characters in the distribution of good and evil. That he refers to this doctrine, appears by his asking Job, ver. 7, 8, whether he had been in the counsel of God, since he pretended to be better informed in the plans of Providence than they.—*Scott*.

By 'fear,' we are to understand that reverence, which all intelligent creatures owe to the Supreme Being, and the decrees of his Providence.

4. *Thou castest off.*]—The Hebrew word imports, annulling, or making void, a moral bond, or obligation. The obligation of religion is broken, he says, by Job's principle, that 'God destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.' The wicked then have nothing to fear, nor the pious any thing to hope, from him. In short, the Providence which Job contended for, was, in this man's account, no Providence at all, and nothing better than absolute atheism.—*Id.*

12. *And what do thine eyes wink at?*]—Rather, 'wherefore do thine eyes look fierce?' ירומן. This word is nowhere else found in the Hebrew Bible. It is, however, happily preserved in the Arabic language; where, according to Schultens, it signifies 'to be in a rage, to scowl, to have a wild and threatening look.' It is a metaphor derived either from the growling of a beast of prey, or from the aspect and rumbling of a thunder-cloud. Excruciating pain, anguish of mind, and indignation at their cruel treatment, had given, perhaps, an air of wildness and fierceness to Job's countenance; which this inhuman censor attributes to passion against God.—See *Scott*.

Rosenmüller prefers our present translation; but Houbigant renders the original, 'Why dost thou remain in the same fixed and stedfast gaze?'

11. *Is there any secret thing with thee?*]—'Hast thou any source of comfort that is unknown to us?'

14. *That he should be clean.*]—That he should presume to be absolutely pure and innocent.

15. *He putteth no trust in his saints.*]—The sense is well expressed by *Scott*:

Not pure, not just, before his piercing sight,
Are ev'n his holy ministers of light.

16. *Which drinketh iniquity like water.*]—This phrase implies the commission of crimes not only without reluctance, but with eagerness and pleasure. The reader must consider the parching thirst of a hot climate, and the scarcity of water, in order to feel the force of this similitude.

17—19. *I will shew thee, &c.*]—Bildad had quoted half a dozen lines of the ancient poetry, that were in the proverbial style. Eliphaz is going to cite a much larger number of the descriptive kind, and in a sublimer strain. He prefaces the citation with observing; first, that the facts alleged in these verses were verified by his own experience; ‘that which I have seen, I will declare.’ Secondly, that these verses contain the observations of the wise in very ancient ages; and had been carefully conveyed down by oral tradition to the present times; ‘which wise men have told from their fathers, and have not hid it:’ and thirdly, that these traditional verses had been preserved pure and perfect, by means of the peculiar circumstances of the persons, through whose hands they had passed: for no foreign colony had intermixed with them; ‘unto whom alone the land was given.’ Neither had their country ever been conquered, ‘and no stranger came upon them;’ characters, which determine the country spoken of to be Arabia Felix; and consequently the cited poem to be an Arabian poem.—*Scott.*

20. *The wicked man, &c.*]—We have here the pleasure of reading a piece of poetry, that was the production of Arabia Felix; more ancient, perhaps, than the old Canaanitish song quoted by Moses, and no less admirable for its sublimity than venerable for its age. The citation ends with the thirtieth verse; for that verse closes the description, which begins at this twentieth verse.—*Id.*

22. *He believeth not, &c.*]—His despair of escaping some unhappy end, assassination for instance, is described here:

He believeth not that he shall return out of darkness,
But (believeth) that he is watched for of the sword.

‘The wicked watcheth the righteous, and seeketh to slay him.’
Ps. xxxvii. 32.—*Id.*

23. *The day of darkness.*]—This may here mean, ‘the day of death;’ or ‘the day of suffering and sorrow.’

25—28. *For he stretcheth out, &c.*]—The poet breaks the thread of his description, of this wicked man’s punishment, to delineate his crimes, which are impiety, (ver. 25, 26.) luxury, (ver. 27.) and rapacity, (ver. 28.)

The images here used are borrowed from the single combat, which was much practised in ancient wars. 'Stretching out the hand' is the attitude of defiance; 'strengthening himself,' or behaving himself insolently, may denote the haughty terms of the challenge; and 'running,' &c. the intrepidity and fury of the attack. These bold metaphors are intended to express the most daring impiety; and an atrocious violation of the laws of God, with contempt of his vindictive justice. The whole may be thus translated:

For he stretched out his hand against God,
And bade defiance to the Almighty.
He ran upon him with his neck,
Upon the thick boss of his buckler.

Homer gives to Jupiter a spear and a shield. The scripture poet arms the Almighty with a shield, a sword, and a bow. See *Scott*, and *Rosenmüller*.

29. *The perfection thereof.*]—Houbigant's version of this last clause is, 'Neither shall his offspring be propagated upon the earth.' Heath, adopting the Arabic derivation of the word by Schultens, reads, 'Neither shall their prosperity take root in the earth.' The next verse continues the metaphor, and renders this interpretation probable.

30. *Darkness.*]—Darkness is here used for 'misery.' 'The flame' may here mean 'lightning,' or 'the Simoom.' By 'his branches,' we may understand not only his offspring; but whatever might be the produce of his riches and power. In the expression, 'his mouth,' the antecedent, 'God,' is suppressed, or understood.

32. *Before his time.*]—That is, the calamitous change just mentioned, shall take place before his days are fulfilled.

32. *His branch shall not be green.*]—That is, 'it shall not continue to flourish.' Compare Ps. i. 3.

34. *Hypocrites.*]—'Profligates.' It is clear that 'the congregation of hypocrites,' and 'the tabernacles of bribery,' mean the same characters; such impious oppressors as are described in the Arabian poem, which he had been reciting. See the note on chap. viii. 13.

35. *They conceive mischief, &c.*]—'Conceiving in misery, and bringing forth in sorrow, their belly has at last produced a deception.' This whole description is evidently pointed at the situation of Job. His prosperity was become vanity; his children were all cut off before their time; his family was become solitary; and his hopes, to all appearance, an illusion. The fine prospect with which the wicked man entertained himself, and for which he endured all the anguish here described,

produceth only a deceit. He hath imposed on himself. See Heath, and the marginal references. 'Belly' seems, in this passage, to be used for the seat of intellect.

CHAP. XVI. VER. 4. *I also could speak, &c.*—'I also could speak, as well as you. If your soul were in my soul's stead, would I accumulate sentences against you? would I shake my head at you?'—*Heath*.

The rendering of this verse interrogatively, gives it a very pathetic turn.

7. *He hath made me weary.*—Rather, 'My grief hath made me weary.' So St. Jerome, and Aben Ezra. Others understand the pronoun 'he' as referring to God.

7. *Thou hast made desolate.*—חֲשַׁמֹּת. If the root שִׁמַּם properly signifies, as Schultens affirms, 'to be blasted by lightning, or by a scorching wind,' this affords a strong and beautiful metaphor to express the effect of the breath of slander. 'Thou, Eliphaz, (so the tenor of the discourse requires us to understand the address), by thy slanders, sanctified by thy years and character, drivest away the few friends that adversity had left me.' We may suppose, that he alludes to the words, chap. xv. 34. 'The congregation of profligates shall be desolate.'

Rosenmüller considers the sentence as an apostrophe to the Supreme Being, and thinks that by 'company,' is meant Job's family, children, and friends. The sudden change of person is by no means unusual in Hebrew poetry.

8. *And thou hast filled me with wrinkles.*—The Hebrew word is תִּקְמַשְׁנִי. The Septuagint reads ἐπελαβὲς με, 'Thou hast laid hold on me.' Grotius remarks, that it is a judicial term, denoting the seizure of a supposed criminal, in order to bring him to trial. It signifies in Chaldee and Syriac, 'to bind,' (Castell. Lex.) and in Arabic, 'to tie the hands and feet;' also, 'to bind a captive.'—*Schultens*.

We translate it, 'to be cut down,' chap. xxii. 16. But I know of no authority for that version, any more than for rendering it here, 'thou hast filled me with wrinkles.' These are the only places where תִּקַּם occurs in the Hebrew Bible. This obscure verse will become clearer, I think, in the following version:

Thou also hast apprehended me as a malefactor.
He is become a witness against me:
Yea, he that belieth me, riseth up against me;
He accuseth me to my face.—*Scott*.

The translation of Symmachus is agreeable to this. Others

consider the 'wrinkles' and 'leanness' in this verse as the effects of his disease. Vid. *Aretæum*, ubi supra.

9. *He gnasheth upon me with his teeth.*]—Homer describing Achilles arming to revenge the death of Patroclus, among other signs of indignation, mentions the grinding, or gnashing, of his teeth:

Τῷ καὶ ὀδοντῶν μὲν καναχῇ πέλε—IL. XIX. 365.

Grief and revenge his furious heart inspire,
His glowing eye-balls roll with living fire:
He grinds his teeth, and, furious with delay,
O'erlooks th' embattled host, and hopes the bloody day.
POPE.

Thus, in Virgil, Hercules is described, 'furens animis, dentibus infrendens,' raging in mind and gnashing his teeth. (*Æn.* viii. 228.) So, also, Polyphemus,

Dentibus infrendens gemitu.—*ÆN.* III. 664.

13. *He poureth out my gall upon the ground.*]—See note on Lam. ii. 11.

Jerome and Grotius are of opinion, that the gall is here used, by the figure Synecdoche, for the whole viscera. But it should be observed that Job's disease, the elephantiasis, had a particular effect on the liver and parts adjacent; and it is probable that a violent bilious discharge is here meant. Vid. *G. Henischii* Comment. in *Aretæum*, lib. ii. cap. 13; and *Schilling*, de Lepra.

15. *Defiled my horn, &c.*]—Or, 'I have defiled my head with dust.' The Syriac renders it, as Mr. Heath observes, 'my head.' The Chaldee paraphrase has 'my glory.' His head, which of late was so highly exalted, and adorned, perhaps, with the tiara, now hung down, covered with sordid dust, or ashes. Compare Psalm lxxv. 5. cxii. 9. This was another rite of mourning among the Arabians, chap. ii. 12, who derived it, perhaps, from the Egyptians. It was in use also among the ancient Greeks. Priam lamented the death of Hector by covering his head with dust, and also rolling himself in it. Achilles, in the extravagance of his grief for Patroclus, sprinkled embers, instead of ashes, upon his head.—*Scott*.

A horn was considered by the ancients as the symbol of power, of honor, of excellence, and of sanctity.—See *Spencer*, De Leg. Heb. p. 678; and the texts referred to in the Index on the word 'Horn.'

16. *On my eye-lids is the shadow of death.*]—He means that

‘There is on his eye-lids an expression of excessive gloominess and sorrow.’

17. *My prayer is pure.*]—That is, sincere, free from all hypocrisy.

18. Bp. Stock renders this verse, ‘O earth, conceal not any blood shed by me; and let there not be room for a cry against me.’ But it is better to consider it as an earnest prayer, expressed in the genuine style of oriental poetry, that the earth would not cover his blood, i. e. furnish him with a grave, nor refuse a place for his cries, till his innocence and integrity, asserted in the preceding verse, should fully appear.

With respect to the use of the negative in the second clause of this verse, see note on 1 Kings ii. 9.

Others understand by, ‘let my cry have no place;’ let it have no place, where it may not be heard: but this is rather a forced construction.

CHAP. XVII. VER. 1. *The graves.*]—The cells, or holes in the sepulchral chambers for the coffins. The walls of these subterraneous rooms hewn in the rock were sometimes scooped into rows of cells, like the holes in a pigeon-house, wide and deep enough to receive a coffin of seven or eight feet long.—*Maundrel’s Journey to Aleppo*, p. 21, 22. *Sandys’s Travels*, p. 175. *Shaw’s Travels*, p. 263, &c. 4to.

This verse, as Scott observes, should have concluded the last chapter.

1. *My breath is corrupt.*]—This was one of the symptoms of Job’s disease. Compare ch. xxx. 17. Vid. *Aretæum*, lib. ii. c. 13.

2. *Doth not mine eye continue in their provocation?*]—Rather, ‘Is not their provocation continually in mine eye?’ Or, ‘Is it not constantly before me?’

3. *Lay down now, &c.*]—‘Appoint, I pray, my surety with thee.’ These are law-terms, and allude to the custom of a person’s giving bail for his appearance in court on the day of trial. The thought of the injury done to his character, by these censors, makes him break out on a sudden in this passionate request, that God would fix a time for his trial before him speedily.—*Scott*.

3. *Who is he that will strike hands, &c.*]—In the days of ancient simplicity, striking hands was thought a sufficient ratification of the most solemn engagements. We learn from the *Œdipus Colonus*, ver. 646, that a treaty of peace was ratified by the contracting powers giving the right hand to one another. The meaning is, ‘Who shall undertake the part of

plaintiff in this cause, or be advocate for God, to justify the ways of his providence towards me?

4. *Shalt thou not exalt them.*]—If we add the word, which in the Hebrew begins the next verse, as the Syriac interpreter has done, the sense will be complete.

For thou hast hid their heart from understanding;
Therefore thou wilt not exalt them to a part.

He means, they were not worthy of the honor of a part in this cause; that is, of being parties, or advocates, in behalf of God. Elihu uses the very same word, chap. xxxii. 17. ‘I will answer also my part.’

5. *The eyes of his children shall fail.*]—The meaning of this metaphorical expression evidently is, that the effects of the father’s vices should be felt by his children. By ‘the failing of the eyes’ we may understand, perhaps, despondency, or an inability to look up; and a downcast look is still considered as expressive of sorrow, shame, and guilt. Heath interprets this verse as follows: ‘Whoso becometh the accuser of his friends, the eyes of his children will fail.’ That is, not only he, but his sons after him, may look till they are weary before they shall find more. See note on chap. xi. 20.

6. *I was as a tabret.*]—Something for them to play upon, and make merry with. The English reader will scarcely fail to associate this expression with the use made of ‘the recorder,’ or ‘pipe,’ in Hamlet. The latter clause should have been rendered, ‘and I shall become as a tabret before them.’ The Hebrew is ותפת לפנים אהיה.

7. *As a shadow.*]—That is, they have lost their substance; they are wasted away.

8. *The innocent shall stir up himself against the hypocrite.*]—Because he will otherwise be led to disparage virtue, piety and innocence, on account of my sufferings.

10. *But as for you all.*]—‘Now, therefore, recollect yourselves, I pray you, all of you, and consider: cannot I find one wise man among you?’—Heath and Houbigant.

11. *The thoughts of my heart.*]—The Septuagint reads, Εἰρημὴν δὲ τὰ αἶθρα τῆς καρδίας μου. ‘My heart-strings are broken.’ Heath, by connecting the latter part of this verse with the beginning of the next, and by giving a different interpretation to the word מורשי, reads, ‘The gnawings of my heart cause it to be night instead of day; the light is short in comparison of the darkness.’

14. *I have said, &c.*]—He transfers all his filial and fraternal

affections to the grave and worm; shewing, by this strong and beautiful mode of expression, how welcome death and dissolution would be to him. Solomon has expressed a high degree of affection in much the same manner, Prov. vii. 4. A greater than Solomon has given his sanction to this phraseology, Matt. xii. 50. I may add, the Roman tragedian has marked the mighty power of another passion, hatred, by the same images: 'One thing is left me, dearer than brother, father, and mother, &c. even hatred of thee.'—*Scott*.

16. *They shall go down.*]—Rather, 'it shall go down,' referring to the antecedent, 'my hope,' in the last verse, unless we read, with Rosenmüller, 'my hopes,' in the plural.

16. *The bars of the pit.*]—A description of the entrance, or gates, of the ancient tombs.

CHAP. XVIII. VER. 2. *How long, &c.*]—Rather, how long will ye put ensnaring words? תַּשְׁמוֹן קִנְיִין לְמַלִּין, 'ponetis laqueos (aucupia) verborum?' The word קִנְיִין is found nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible. But the verb in Arabic signifies 'to hunt, to lay nets and snares;' and is applied, as Schultens shews, to 'the using of deceitful arts.' See his Commentary. By 'ensnaring words,' he means artful harangues, calculated to catch the passions, and to direct the attention of the hearer from the main point in dispute. In this view, he considered Job's declamations on his innocence and sufferings. It is remarkable, that Bildad addresses himself to a plurality of persons; 'How long will ye put,' &c. either because he had observed some of the audience giving signs of favoring the part of Job; or intending, as Schultens thinks, to represent him as the leader of an infidel sect: if so, by 'ensnaring words,' must be meant 'sophistical evasions.'—*Scott*.

4. *He teareth himself in his anger.*]—O thou, that tearest thyself in thine anger. 'Shall the earth,' &c.—*Rosenmüller*. For this substitution of the vocative case, compare Ob. 3, 4; Hab. ii. 15, 16.

4. *Shall the earth be forsaken for thee, and shall the rock be removed out of his place?*]—When the Orientalists would reprove the pride, or arrogance of any man, it is common for them to desire him to call to mind how little and contemptible he and every mortal is, in these, or similar apophthegms:

What though Mahommed were dead;
His imams (or ministers) conducted the affairs of the nation.
'The universe shall not fall for his sake.
'The world does not subsist for one man alone.

Bp. Lowth's Lect. (Dr. Gregory's Translat.) vol. ii. p. 420.

5, 6. *The light of the wicked, &c.*]—There is an allusion in these verses, perhaps, to what the Arabian poet calls ‘the fires of hospitality.’ These were beacons lighted upon the tops of hills by persons of distinction among the Arabs, to direct and invite travellers to their houses and tables. Hospitality was their national glory; and the loftier and larger these fires were, the greater was the magnificence thought to be. A wicked, rich man, therefore, would affect this piece of state, from vanity and ostentation.

Another Arabian poet expresses the permanent prosperity of his family almost in the very words of our author: ‘Neither is our fire, lighted for the benefit of the night-stranger, extinguished.’—*Scott*.

11. *Shall drive him to his feet.*]—Castalio interprets the Hebrew expression, ‘And shall entangle his feet.’ Perhaps it is equivalent to our common phrase, ‘Shall make him take to his heels.’

12, 13. *His strength, &c.*]—‘His pain, or painful disease,’ אָנָּה; it is the same with אָנָּה, which we render by ‘affliction,’ chap. v. 6. The Arabic interpreter renders it, in the verse before us, רָרָה, disease; the Syriac, כָּאֵב, which signifies any painful disease, in the bowels, the loins, the head, &c. also the leprosy. Vid. Castell. Lex. Hept. כָּאֵב. The poet thus styles one of the ‘Furies.’ To raise the idea, he adds, it ‘shall be hunger-bitten,’ furious as a beast of prey in the rage of hunger. He next names it ‘destruction;’ and says, ‘it was decreed to his side;’ to signify that it was of an extraordinary kind, sent by the immediate hand of God, and would prove mortal. To complete the climax, he styles it ‘the first-born of death,’ an expression that denotes the terribleness of the death in which this disease would end. That a ‘bodily affliction,’ some terrible and mortal disease, is intended, appears from its being represented ‘as devouring the strength of his skin.’

15. *Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation.*]—Scheuchzer (Physic. Sacr. vol. iv. p. 709.) is of opinion, that this expression refers to the lustration of houses with sulphur, to drive away dæmons, remove impurity, and make them fit to dwell in: (Homer, Od. xxii. ad finem) but others think it is to be understood of the burning of sulphur in houses at funerals to testify and exaggerate mourning. Livy mentions this practice as usual among the Romans.

It is supposed by some to allude to the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, which the Hebrew poets and prophets, Bp. Lowth remarks, used as an image of all other desolating judgments of God.—*Scott*.

17. *He shall have no name in the street.*]—That is, 'his name shall no where be publicly recorded.'

'——— He perisheth. Him no memorial pile
Saves from oblivion with inscriptive style.'—*Scott*.

20. *His day.*]—Either 'the day of his death;' or 'the period of his sufferings on earth.'

21. *This is the place.*]—Rather, 'This is the condition.'

CHAP. XIX. VER. 3. *Ye are not ashamed, &c.*]—Heath reads this interrogatively, 'Are ye not ashamed?' &c. The Hebrew word *תהכרר*, which our translators render, 'Ye make yourselves strange to me,' is derived from an Arabic word signifying obstinacy, impudence, and violence. Vid. *Castell. Lex.* The whole clause, therefore, might be rendered, 'Are you not ashamed to persecute me with such obstinacy and virulence?'

A somewhat different interpretation may be, 'That ye behave to me like strangers, and of course enemies.' Or, as men who have no fellow-feeling for those sufferings, which may happen to yourselves.

4. *Mine error.*]—That is, 'The consequence, or effect of mine error.' I am the only sufferer, not you.

5. *And plead against me my reproach.*]—'And plead that my sufferings are a proof of my guilt;' which is the reproach they had so often cast on him.

7. *Out of wrong.*]—That is, 'From a deep sense of injury.'

9. *The crown.*]—This may mean the richer kinds of turbans, which are still worn by Arabs of distinction, and considered as their chief ornament; or the expression may be metaphorical, signifying his dignity, and the honors which he had been accustomed to receive from his fellow-creatures, in consequence of his power, justice, and beneficence. The primitive meaning of a 'crown,' and of a 'diadem,' is that which encircles the head, or binds it round.—See *Scott*.

12. *His troops.*]—By this expression, numberless ills and afflictions seem to be meant. The metaphors in this verse are derived from an army besieging a town or citadel. The practice of raising up mounds for the purpose of overlooking the walls, and annoying the besieged, was very common in ancient warfare.

17. *My breath is strange.*]—Rather, 'is become loathsome;' or 'very different from what it used to be.' Houbigant renders this verse, 'My wife abhors even my breath, the children of my body fly far from my offensive smell.' He observes, we are no where told that all the children of Job

perished; but only such as were feasting in their elder brother's house. But may not the offspring of his slaves, who formed a part of his numerous household, at least with reference to property, be called 'his children?'

20. *I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.*]—'To escape with the skin of the teeth,' seems to have been a proverbial expression, signifying that a person had been so mangled and disfigured, as to have no sound part over the surface of his body.

22. *And are not satisfied with my flesh.*]—To eat, or devour the flesh of another, is an Arabian expression, signifying the indulgence of calumny, slander, and reproach.—*Schultens.*

22. *Why do ye persecute me as God?*]—The Hebrew is כִּמּוֹ-אֵל. Mr. Weston, by dividing these words differently, would read, 'Why do you persecute me as enemies?'

The Hebrew is *chemo-el*, as God; but that is not the sense required. Job had said, 'Have pity on me, my friends, why do ye persecute me (*che-moel*) as enemies?' See Nehemiah ii. 38. He says, the hand of God had afflicted him, or 'touched' him, but not 'persecuted' him.—*Sunday Lessons*, vol. i.

23. *Oh that my words were now written!*]—The most ancient way of writing was upon the leaves of the palm-tree. (Pliny, lib. xiii. cap. 11.) Afterwards they made use of the inner bark of a tree for this purpose; which inner bark being in Latin called 'liber,' and in Greek βιβλος, from hence a book hath ever since in the Latin language been called 'liber,' and in the Greek βιβλος, because their books anciently consisted of leaves made of such inner barks. The Chinese still make use of such inner barks, or rinds of trees, to write upon, as some of their books brought into Europe plainly shew. Another way made use of among the Greeks and Romans, and which was as ancient as Homer, (for he makes mention of it) was, to write on tables of wood, covered over with wax. On these they wrote with a bodkin, or style of iron, with which they engraved the letters on the wax; and hence it is that the different ways of men's writings, or compositions, are called different 'styles.' This way was mostly made use of in the writing of letters or epistles; hence such epistles are in Latin called 'tabellæ,' and the carriers of them 'tabellarii.' When their epistles were thus written, they tied the tables together with a thread, or string, setting their seal upon the knot, and sent them to the party to whom they were directed, who, cutting the string, opened and read them. But, on the invention of the Egyptian papyrus for this use, all the other ways of writing were soon superseded, no material till then invented being more convenient to write upon

than this. And therefore when Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, began to form a large library, and to collect all sorts of books together, he caused them to be copied on this sort of paper; which was exported also for the use of other countries, till Eumenes king of Pergamus, endeavouring to establish a library at Pergamus, which should excel that at Alexandria, occasioned a prohibition to be laid on the exportation of that commodity. This put Eumenes upon the invention of making books of parchment, on which he afterwards copied the works of learned men, and put them in his library; hence it is that parchment is called in Latin '*pergamena*,' that is, from the city Pergamus in Asia Minor, where it was first used for this purpose among the Greeks. For that Eumenes, on this occasion, first invented the making of parchment cannot be true; for in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and other parts of the Holy Scriptures, many ages before the time of Eumenes, we find mention made of rolls of writing; and who can doubt but that these rolls were of parchment? From the time that the noble art of printing has been invented, the paper which is made of the paste of linen rags is that which has been generally used both in writing and in printing, as being the most convenient for both, and the use of parchment has been mostly appropriated to records, registers, and instruments of law, for which, by reason of its durableness, it is most fit. (Prideaux's *Connection*, vol. ii. p. 707, 9th edit.) It is observable, also, that anciently they wrote their public records on volumes, or rolls of lead, and their private matters on fine linen and wax. The former of these customs we trace in Job's wish, 'Oh, that my words were now written! oh, that they were printed in a book! that they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever!' There is a way of writing in the East, which is designed to fix words in the memory, but the writing is not designed to continue. The children in Barbary that are sent to school, Dr. Shaw tells us, (*Trav.* p. 194) make no use of paper, but each boy writes on a smooth, thin board, slightly daubed over with whiting, which may be wiped off, or renewed, at pleasure. There are few that retain what they have learned in their youth; doubtless things were often wiped out of the memory of the Arabs in the days of Job, as well as out of their writing-tablets. Job therefore says, 'Oh, that they were written in a book, from whence they should not be blotted out!' But books were liable to injuries, and for this reason he wishes his words might be even '*graven in a rock*,' the most lasting way of all. Thus the distinction between '*writing*,' and '*writing in a book*,' becomes perfectly intelligible, and the grada-

tion appears in its beauty, which is lost in our translation, where the word 'printed' is introduced, which, beside its impropriety, conveys no idea of the meaning of Job; records that are designed to last long, not being distinguished from less durable papers by being printed.—*Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 127. See, also, *Prideaux*; and *Jones's* Vindication of the former part of St. Matthew's Gospel, chap. xiv. and xv.

24. *And lead.*—That is, for the purpose of writing, or graving on, with an iron pen, or style. Michaëlis says, he does not understand what the Hebrew word means, which we translate 'lead.' We are certain, however, that it is classed with metals; gold, silver, iron, and tin: also that it signifies a substance ponderous and fusible. It must, therefore, denote some heavy metal, or mineral. We learn farther, from Dr. Shaw, that very probably there are lead-mines in the mountains of Arabia Petræa; for he found among those rocks plenty of selenites, or moon-stone, which is said to be a certain sign of lead-ore underneath. Add to all this, Pliny informs us, that writing on lead was of high antiquity; that it was practised next after writing on the bark and leaves of trees; and that it was used in recording public transactions.

Jarchi, Castell, and others, are of opinion, that the text refers to the ancient practice of cutting the letters with a style, or chisel, first, and then filling up the strokes with molten lead.—See *Rosenmüller*.

24. *In the rock.*—Dr. Pococke met with hieroglyphic characters cut in the rock, in the sepulchres of the kings of Thebes. Greaves also makes mention of an inscription of one line in those sacred Egyptian characters, which he observed in the second pyramid. As to the written mountains, in the desert of Sinai, which are covered with unknown characters; that accurate traveller, the Hon. Edward Wortley Montagu, who nicely examined them, has offered good argument to prove that they were the work of Christian pilgrims in the first ages of christianity.—*Scott*.

25. *I know that my Redeemer liveth.*—'I make no scruple,' says Bp. Warburton, 'to declare for the opinion of those who understand these words, to signify Job's confidence in a temporal deliverance from his afflictions; as all agree they *may* signify. And therefore I shall the less insist upon a common observation, that our translators, being of a different opinion, gave a force to their expression, which the original will by no means support. My reasons are these: 1. The understanding the words of a resurrection is repugnant to the whole tenor of the argument; and the other sense is exactly correspondent to it.'

2. The end and design of the whole composition absolutely require this latter sense, and disclaim the other. Allowing the words of Job to respect a future state, it may be said by those who hold this book to be one of the earliest in the Holy Scriptures, that the Jewish people must not only have had the knowledge of a future state of rewards and punishments; but, what is more, of the resurrection of the body, and still more, of the redemption of mankind by the Son of God: therefore Moses had no need to inculcate the doctrine of a future state. But I much suspect, that the clear knowledge of so sublime a mystery, which, St. Paul says, had been hid from ages and from generations, but was now (on the preaching of the gospel) made manifest to the saints, Col. i. 26, was not at all suited to the times of Job, or Moses.

The learned and impartial divine will be more inclined to conclude, perhaps, either that the book of Job was written in a much later age, or that this famous passage has no such meaning. Dr. Kennicott thinks that Job, in these remarkable words, referred only to God's appearing in favor of his innocence before his death; which, we read, he actually did, by restoring his possessions and his children. Scott's literal translation of this passage is,

Ver. 25. For I know, my Redeemer is the living one,
And he, the last, will o'er the dust stand up:

Ver. 26. And my skin which is thus torn, shall be another;
and in my flesh I shall see God.

Ver. 27. Whom I shall see, even mine eyes shall behold on
my side, and not estranged; my reins are consumed within me.

He adds the following remarks. Some interpreters understand this famous passage of a temporal salvation: but Job had all along despaired of such a deliverance. Even after uttering these words, he continued in the same despair. Moreover, Elihu addresses him as a person still without hope of recovery. This, therefore, cannot be the true interpretation of the words. Neither can they be justly applied to the manifestation of God in his favor, which is related chap. xlii. 7, 8: for that manifestation is not said to have been a visible one; and if it were, Job saw it not. It was made to Eliphaz alone.

Neither can this passage be referred to God's appearance to Job himself in the poem; for the whole design of that appearance was to reprimand and humble him. There is not the

most distant hint in the Almighty's speech, of an intention to vindicate and restore him.

In short, these words are no anticipation of the history which is subjoined to the poem; much less of the catastrophe of the poem itself: for the catastrophe of the poem is Job's repentance.

It remains, therefore, that in this passage the good man is supporting himself under a heavy load of calumny and other afflictions, by the faith of a resurrection from the grave, and a future judgment; when his innocence should be fully cleared, and his integrity amply rewarded.

Bp. Stock's translation of ver. 25 is,

Still do I know that my vindicator liveth,
And in time to come, over the dust he will rise up;

That is, he remarks, 'Over a thing like me, buried in the dust, he will rise up to vindicate me.' יָקוּם alludes, as Heath has remarked, to the custom of a judge's rising from his seat, when he is going to pronounce sentence.

The Jews, says Grotius, have never applied these words to prove the resurrection of the body, though they studiously examine every thing in their Scriptures that can possibly be brought to give a color to that doctrine. Many Christians, indeed, have adduced this text, among others, to establish their belief of it; but in order to do this, they have been obliged, as Mercier remarks, to make their translations differ considerably from the original. The Hebrew is, 'I know that my redeemer lives, and that he, at last, shall stand on the field. Although these, (i. e. diseases) should consume not only my skin but also this, (i. e. that which is under it) yet in my flesh (i. e. before I die) I shall see God, (i. e. according to Grotius, I shall experience his favor, or find him propitious), I say, with these mine eyes; I, not another for me.' God is said to be a redeemer because he often delivers the righteous from many calamities. Compare Ps. 78. 35; Isaiah xli. 14; xliii. 14; xlv. 6; xlvii. 4; xlviii. 17; xlix. 7. 'To stand, at last, on the field,' i. e. to continue in possession of it, is a phrase which denotes triumph, and gives us the idea of a conqueror; or, as Rosenmüller supposes, of perpetual existence. Thus Job says that God would triumph over his adversaries; and that it was not impossible for him to restore his body, which was now almost destroyed with corruption, to its former state of health; which the Almighty really did.—See *Grotius*, in loco.

If Grotius's translation of the last clause be right, which

agrees in substance with ours, the phrase of 'seeing with his own eyes' may, by a very usual metaphor, be transferred, on this occasion, to the perceptions of the mind; and Job may mean that he himself should experience, and have a perfect conviction of, the justice and mercy of his great Creator, without being obliged to receive any harsh, unfeeling dogmas on the subject, through the medium of his persecuting friends. That this is frequently the sense of the Hebrew verb there can be no doubt. (See Parkhurst, on ראה; and Rosenmüller on Matt. xiv. 30.)

The whole context is elliptical, and without offering any violence to the original, a somewhat different translation may be offered, by taking one of the *vaus* to signify *though, since, or because*, and another in a demonstrative sense, to mean, *namely, or that is to say*. Thus; 'I know that my deliverer lives, and at last shall stand on the dust,' [the surface of the ground in Arabia was generally covered with sand and dust] 'and after diseases shall have destroyed this my skin, I shall in my flesh,' [that is, while living, or, perhaps, in a state of restored health] 'see God,' [in other words, experience his mercy] 'whom I shall see for me, though no one else is,' [that is, I shall see him standing up in my defence, or for my comfort] 'namely, that God, whom mine eyes have [heretofore] contemplated, or dwelt on with pleasure.' It is in the original ראה, 'have seen,' in the plural number, and in the past tense, see ch. vii. 7. By using in this text the term 'Redeemer,' one of the titles of the heavenly Messiah, our translation might bias or mislead the English reader's judgment. The Hebrew is גאל, the same word that is used to designate Boaz, as the kinsman of Ruth; and, in the language of the Pentateuch, it means the avenger of blood, a kinsman, and one who redeems a pledge that has been given, an inheritance that has been sold, or a relation that has been reduced to slavery.—See *Parkhurst, Taylor, and Doederlein*, in loco.

26.] Bp. Stock's translation of this verse is,

And after they shall have swathed my skin, even this,
Yet from out of my flesh shall I see God.

The Hebrew is, 'After they shall have compassed about.' The verb גָּלַס, used here impersonally, denotes the act of swathing a mummy, according to the well-known practice of those times. זאת 'even this' pointing to his skin. Observe the amplification. Though my body were laid in the dust; though it were swathed by its rollers; though my bowels were

taken out (for my embalming) and consumed; yet shall this very body be restored to me, and these eyes behold my deliverer.

‘And here,’ continues Bp. Stock, ‘the celebrated question naturally presents itself, whether Job in this passage is to be understood as speaking of a general resurrection to life eternal, common to himself with all the righteous; or of his own temporal salvation, and return, at some distant period, to happiness in this world. A close attention to the context has led me to be of the latter opinion, and with Heath to join Bp. Warburton against his very learned opponents, Peters, Scott, and Parkhurst. My argument is this: If the passage before us can be explained, without recurring to the doctrine of a future resurrection, of which we have no other proof that it existed in the time of Job, it should be so explained and understood. But the passage needs no recurrence to the doctrine of a future resurrection. Therefore, against my assumption, it is strongly contended, ‘that Job all along despaired of a temporal deliverance, and of course he must have meant an eternal.’ Answer: not always, as may be shewn from chap. xiv. 12. above. But what if he did so for the most part? Is it not very conceivable, that when urged by his ill-natured counsellors to confess a guiltiness of which his conscience acquitted him, he should answer by strong assertions of his belief, that God would at length vindicate his innocence to the world by bringing him back from the grave, however desperate at present that hope might appear to be? ‘But even after uttering these words, he repeats his belief that he should die, chap. xxx. 23. 24.’ Granted: but not his belief that God was unable, or unwilling, to call him up again from the lower world. And that he did conceive an expectation of returning, at some future period, to see his own innocence vindicated, and his calumniators punished, may, I think, with reason be concluded from what he says in a subsequent verse, 29, where he cautions his friends to fear for themselves, whenever God shall have made himself a judge between him and them.’

‘But though this much-disputed text does not appear, in its primary import, to convey the clear notice of a life to come, which many expositors have ascribed to it, it does not by any means follow, that a pious Christian may not now apply it to the strengthening of his own belief in that grand article of his religion. We know that many passages of holy scripture, beside their first and most obvious meaning, carry a second and a more important one, unknown to the writers themselves; and left by

the Spirit that dictated them to be unfolded, in process of time, to such as study them with attention, and desire to profit by them.'—*Bp. Stock.*

It may be said, that if Job had entertained a firm belief of the resurrection of the body, the great and important doctrine, which is so admirably calculated to reconcile the dispensations of Providence in this life to the justice and mercy of God, would not have been mentioned thus slightly, once, in an incidental manner, in elliptical sentences, and in dark, equivocal terms; but it would have broken out on various occasions, if it had not given a sort of pervading interest to the argumentations of the whole poem: whereas, it is not once glanced at in the long address of Elihu, nor in the celebrated speech, which is put into the mouth of the Almighty himself. Besides, it should be particularly remembered, that the poem concludes with the full completion of Job's expectations, and a restoration to a state of greater worldly prosperity than he enjoyed before.

See *Rosenmüller* in loco, and the writers there quoted and referred to.

There appears, notwithstanding, an uncommon propensity in the critics and commentators of all ages to graft this essential article of a Christian's faith on this controverted text; but surely it seems a little preposterous, that they should be so anxious to take from the Holy Gospel the revelation and assurance of that great doctrine, which constitutes its chief glory, and transfer it to Judaism, or the mixed theology of Pagan philosophers.

See *Bp. Sherlock's* second Dissertation; and *Doederlein*, in loco.

The reader is now in possession of the *substance* of nearly all that has been written on this disputable text, and he is left to form his own opinion on the subject.

28. *But ye should say, &c.]—Rather,*

Whereas ye say, why do we urge him farther,
Since the root of the business is found in himself?

בִּי, 'in himself,' is the reading of a great number of copies instead of בִּי, 'in me.' 'Why should we trouble ourselves to convict him, since it is manifest, that his misery hath its root, or cause, in his own misconduct?'—See *Bp. Stock.*

29. *Be ye afraid of the sword.]—*The sword in the hand of earthly magistrates is the emblem of punitive justice. The Scripture, accordingly, puts a sword into the hand of God, the supreme magistrate, to signify his vindictive justice. And the greatest of all teachers represents the future punishments of

wicked men in terms of allusion to the punishments inflicted by the courts of human judicature. Matt. v. 22.—*Scott*.

29. *For wrath bringeth, &c.*]—Mr. Heath's version is, 'For these are crimes punishable by the sword.' That is, your inhumanity, uncharitableness, and calumnies, are capital crimes before God; and will meet with severe punishment in the day of the revelation of his righteous judgment.—*Id.*

CHAP. XX. VER. 3. *The check of my reproach.*]—That is, 'The reproachful check, or correction, that has been uttered against me.'

10. *His children, &c.*]—His children shall hereafter be compelled to pay their court to the poor; and his own hands shall restore their goods, which he had taken possession of by fraud and violence. See ver. 18.

11. *Full of the sin of his youth.*]—The Hebrew may be rendered 'full of secret sins.' See *Houbigant*, and *Rosenmüller*. Our translators follow the Vulgate.

14. *The gall of asps.*]—Lamy renders it, 'The gall of adders.' It was an ancient opinion, that the poison of serpents consisted in their gall.

17. *The brooks of honey and butter.*]—In our northern regions, we have scarcely an idea of butter so liquid as described in these words; it appears among us in a more solid form. But as the plentiful flowing of honey, when pressed from the comb, may be compared to a little river, as it runs into the vessels in which it is to be kept; so, as they manage matters, butter is equally fluid, and may be described in the same way. A great quantity of butter is made in Barbary, which, after it is boiled with salt, they put into jars, and preserve for use. (Dr. Shaw, p. 169.) Streams of butter then, when clarified, and poured into jars to be preserved, might as naturally be compared to rivers, as streams of honey flowing upon pressure into other jars, in which it was kept.

Rivers, honey, and milk, are oriental emblems of felicity; and it is possible, that the utter loss of all Job's former abundance and enjoyments may be here intended. But I very much suspect, that a worse punishment is threatened; even exclusion from 'the seats of the blessed.' The blessings of religion, and the future happiness of good men, are represented in Scripture under these pleasant images. Similar to these is the description of Paradise in the Koran: 'Therein are rivers of incorruptible water, and rivers of milk, the taste whereof changeth not; and rivers of wine, pleasant unto those who drink; and rivers of clarified honey.' If this verse be understood of happiness in a

future world, it is certainly out of its place, and will enter more properly next after ver. 25. The last sentence of that verse, 'terrors are upon him,' I think, says Scott, relates to future punishments: The translation will then be,

And terrors apprehend his flitting soul:
For never, never shall his eyes behold
The happy fields, where brooks of liquid gold
Gush from the comb, and where on milky streams
The purple light expands its purest beams.—*Scott.*

See notes on ch. xix. 25, 26; Gen. xviii. 8; and Judg. v. 25.

18. *Shall not swallow it down.*]—That is, 'He shall not be able to enjoy it.'

20. *His belly.*]—Here again the word 'belly' seems to be taken for 'heart,' the seat of sensibility and passion. It is nearly equivalent to *Σπλαγχνα*, or 'viscera,' in Greek, and to the English word 'bowels,' so often used in our translation of the New Testament. See Luke i. 78; (marginal reading) 2 Cor. vi. 12; Philipp. i. 8. ii. 1; Col. iii. 12; 1 John iii. 17.

21. *There shall none of his meat be left.*]—The Hebrew is, 'There is none left for his prey.' Mr. Heath's freer version expresses the sense, 'Nothing could escape his rapacity.' His vice is here marked in language more forcible than in the foregoing verse.—*Scott.*

21. *For his goods.*]—For any property, or effects, which he may leave behind.

The more obvious meaning is, that there should be nothing more left for him to devour.

24. *He shall flee, &c.*]—'He would flee from the weapons, but the brazen bow shall strike him through.' God is at war with him. The Scripture arms the Divine Being with a sword, a bow and arrows, to represent his vengeance. Ps. vii. 12, 13. (compare chap. vi. 4, xv. 26.) All his efforts to ward off the calamities which fall upon him will be ineffectual. The Arabian writers are very fond of a bow, and frequently use it to image extraordinary, inevitable, and destructive calamities from the hand of God. The learned Schultens has favored us with several examples from their poets, in his note on this verse.—*Scott.*

26. *All darkness.*]—Darkness is here metonymically taken for misery; and 'all darkness' means every species of calamity and distress. The word 'tabernacle' in this verse, and elsewhere, should have been always rendered by 'tent,' to distinguish it from the Jewish tabernacle, which was erected for the purposes of public worship.

26. *A fire not blown.*]—Rather, ‘a fire that requires no blowing.’ It shall be fierce enough without.

27. *The heaven shall reveal, &c.*]—The heavens shall publish his guilt, by lightning; for instance, such as destroyed Job’s sheep; and by storms of wind, such as destroyed his children.—*Scott.*

27. *And the earth, &c.*]—The earth will rise up against him, when those whom he hath plundered shall in their turn plunder him: or when, as in the case of Job, the thieves of the desert shall make incursions, and carry off his cattle.—*Id.*

28. *His wrath.*]—Meaning the wrath of God.

CHAP. XXI. VER. 2. *And let this be your consolations.*]—Schultens renders it, ‘And this shall be in return for your consolations,’ understanding it as spoken ironically. Perhaps the meaning is, ‘All the comfort, or consolation, that I expect from you, is to hear me.’ So Bp. Patrick and Rosenmüller understand it.

11. *Their children dance.*]—Rather, ‘Their children skip like lambs.’ It is the same word in the original, as in Ps. cxiv. 4.

12. *At the sound of the organ.*]—The word ‘organ,’ in our translation, is always to be understood, indefinitely, of a musical instrument, the form of which is not precisely known.

13. *In a moment, &c.*]—This is that sudden and easy death, in ‘a green old age,’ without pain, without lingering sickness, and while their families are flourishing around them, which Tiresias predicts to Ulysses in the shades: ‘Death shall come to thee from the sea: it shall be a gentle death. It shall come when thou art subdued by a happy old age, and thy people about thee are happy.’ No doubt the suffering Job contrasted his own wretched condition of lingering disease with these happy men.—*Scott.*

16. *Lo, their good, &c.*]—The sense of this passage, says Bp. Stock, has been lost by not observing that, in the warmth of argument, objections are started and answers returned without the usual introduction of ‘say ye,’ and ‘say I.’ Modern writers are fond of this brevity in dialogue; but they possess the advantage of pointing out to the reader by breaks, or inverted commas, the difference between the several speakers they introduce. See the same remark in Schultens, and Rosenmüller.

The sentiment in the former part of this verse appears to be the same as that chap. xii. 9, ‘Who knoweth not in all these, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this?’

According to the Hebrew idiom, this may mean, ‘Their good is not in any danger of being taken from them.’ See note on Judg. xii. 3. The latter clause may be rendered,

‘But far be the counsel of the wicked from me;’ where by ‘counsel’ is meant the general plan, or principle, of their conduct.

17. *How oft is the candle of the wicked put out!*]—From the account that is given us of the modern use of lamps in Egypt, we may infer the manner in which they were made use of anciently there; and if we suppose the same to be practised in the neighbouring countries of Arabia and Judea, it will serve to explain several passages of Scripture, by setting them in a new light; among which this expression of Job is one, in which he describes the destruction of a family among the Arabs, and the rendering one of their habitations desolate, by their candle being put out. Maillet assures us, that the houses of Egypt at this time are never without lights: they burn lights not only all the night long, but in all the inhabited apartments of a house; and this custom is so universal, that the poorest people would rather retrench part of their food than neglect it.—See *Harmer*, vol. i. p. 322.

One of Job’s opponents must be supposed to deliver the remark in this verse, and to the middle of ver. 19.

19. *He rewardeth him, and he shall know it.*]—Rather, ‘He should requite the man himself, and he should know, or feel it.’ This is the reply of Job.

20. *His eyes shall see, &c.*]—This would be better in the imperative mood, ‘Let his eyes see his own destruction, and let he himself’ (not his children) ‘drink of the wrath of the Almighty.’

21. *For what pleasure, &c.*]—Or, ‘What interest can he take in his house after him,’ &c.

21. *When the number of his months is cut off in the midst.*]—The Hebrew word is לצטק, which, according to Cocceius, implies an allusion to the ancient mode of computing by pebbles, or by arrows. If so, the expression in the text denotes living till the full term of human life, when the number of his months is counted out; and our present translation, as well as that of Montanus and others, is faulty.

22. *Shall any teach God knowledge?*]—‘Who will presume to mend his dispensations?’ Or, as Mr. Pope strongly expresses it,

Snatch from his hand the balance and the rod,
Rejudge his justice, be the god of God!

ESSAY ON MAN.

This and the four following verses must be given to one of Job’s opponents.

22. *Seeing he judgeth, &c.*]—‘To judge,’ often signifies in Scripture, ‘to govern.’ It comprehends the whole office of a

supreme magistrate. The argument here is from the greater to the less: he that ruleth the higher world of intellectual beings, knows surely how to manage the little affairs of humankind. This is a noble sentiment, and ought to have silenced his own murmurings. But his mind was too much discomposed by his passions, to be constantly influenced by his better principles.

24. *His breasts, &c.*]—In the original it is עֲטִינִי, a word that is found no where else in the Hebrew Bible. It is, however, preserved in the Arabic language; in which it signifies, as the learned Schultens has proved, ‘the places about ponds where camels and sheep go to drink:’ thence it came to be used for a large abundance of those things, which are accounted riches in Arabia, such as ‘extensive pastures well stocked with cattle.’ Mr. Heath therefore was not wrong in translating it, ‘his granges;’ that is, ‘his farms;’ or, as Scott renders it, ‘his pastures are full of milk.’ In other words, they produce abundance of milk in the flocks and herds that feed on them.

Perhaps, ‘the teats,’ or ubera of his cattle are meant. Our translation is almost absurd; unless we understand by it something like ‘the milk of human kindness.’ See the Marginal Reading.

Bp. Stock renders it, ‘His bowels are full of fat;’ which may indicate, that he was devoid of feeling. See note on Matt. xiii. 15.

28. *The prince.*]—Rather, ‘The prosperous, good and powerful man.’

29. *Their tokens.*]—Rather, ‘the evidence,’ or ‘the testimony,’ which they give.

30. *The wicked is reserved, &c.*]—The original will admit, and Job’s argument requires the translation to be, ‘The wicked is preserved in the day of destruction.’ לְיוֹם, Psal. lxxxi. 3, ‘in,’ or ‘on the day,’ Prov. vii. 20, ‘He will come home at the day (or on the day) appointed.’ Exod. xxiii. 15, ‘in the time appointed of the month Abib.’ See also Psal. lix. 6. 14. לָעֶרֶב, ‘at,’ or ‘in the evening,’ לְבֹקֶר, ‘in the morning.’ Also Ps. lxxi. 9, לָעֵת, ‘in the time;’ and in the Chaldee, לְעֵדָו, ‘in the time,’ i. e. of old age. The Chaldee again in Ps. xcix. 5, 9, לְבֵית, ‘in the house,’ לְטוֹר, ‘in the mountain.’ The learned Schultens therefore is justified in turning this clause, ‘Verily, the wicked is withdrawn in the day of destruction.’ See also Isaiah x. 3, ‘in the day of visitation;’ and in Habak. iii. 16, ‘in the day of trouble.’—Scott.

30. *They shall be brought forth.*]—Scott proposes to read, ‘They are feasted,’ or ‘they feast, in the day of wrath.’ He thinks the Hebrew will bear this sense, agreeably to the tenor

of the whole discourse, which is intended to shew, that many wicked men live in splendor and festivity even in the most calamitous times. The original word is **יִבְלֵל**, but, if, by adding a **ל**, we read **יִבְלֵלֵל**, the root will be **בָּלַל**, 'to anoint,' the same word that is used Ps. xcii. 10, 'I shall be anointed with fresh oil:' and as perfumes made a distinguished part in the eastern banquets, hence the word might naturally come to signify, feasting. Accordingly, in Arabic, the substantive noun, **بَلَل**, is convivium, i. e. a banquet. Vid. *Castell. Lexicon*.

33. *The clods of the valley shall be sweet unto him.*—These words seem to suppose that the person buried in a grave may partake in some respects of the state of the tomb which contains him. Such an idea appears to have been indulged by Sultan Amurath the Great, who died in 1450. 'Presently after his death, Mahomet his sonne, for feare of some innouation to be made at home, raised the siege and returned to Hadrianople: and afterwards with great solemnitie buried his dead body at the west side of Prusa, in the suburbs of the citie, where he now lieth, in a chappell without any rooffe, his graue nothing differing from the manner of the common Turks; which they say he commanded to be done in his last will, that the mercie and blessing of God (as he termed it) might come vnto him by the shining of the sunne and moone, and falling of the raine and dew of heauen upon his graue.'—*Knolles's Hist. of the Turks*, p. 332.

Instead of 'clods,' Bp. Stock reads 'the sods,' of which the tumulus, or barrow, of a great man was composed. These are described as being sweet, or pleasant to him, because they contributed to preserve his memory.

33. *Every man shall draw after him.*—Some commentators, with Bp. Stock, understand this clause as describing an immense funeral procession, in which the dead body was both preceded and followed to the grave by innumerable crowds.

CHAP. XXII. VER. 4. *Will he reprove thee, &c.*—'Will he reason with thee for fear of thee? will he enter with thee into judgment?' Is he afraid that his character will suffer by thy complaints, unless, in obedience to thy citation, he submit to a trial, and argue his own cause? This is strong irony, and manifestly designed to ridicule those rash expressions in chap. ix. 32—35; xiii. 22, &c. The Hebrew is **יִכְיִיחֶךָ**. The same verb signifies, 'To plead one's cause,' chap. xiii. 3. The other phrase, 'Enter into judgment,' is also judicial, and means 'to come to a trial,' chap. ix. 32. He is not a man as I am, that we should come together in judgment.—*Scott*.

6. *Thou hast taken a pledge, &c.*]—He is here charged with such rapacity, as to force even his relations to give security to him for debts which they did not owe; and with seizing the upper garment of the poor for pawn, which answers to a creditor among us taking a man's bed from under him for payment; for the poor in those countries had no other covering at night, when they slept, than their outer garment, Deut. xxiv. 13. which they wore in the day. Their upper garment is called a hyke, which is a piece of blanketing, five or six yards long, and five or six yards broad. This is wrapped over the tunic, or close-bodied frock, and in time of work, or action, it is girded about their waist.—*Dr. Shaw's Travels*, p. 226, &c. 4to.

6. *Naked.*]—By taking away their blanket, or upper garment, he left them naked, according to the mode of speaking in the East; that is, he left them only their tunic and shirt. A person also who was ill-clad, or in rags, was said to be 'naked;' as Seneca tells us, *Benef. lib. v. 13.* See note on 1 Sam. xix. 24.

8. *Had the earth.*]—Rather, 'Took possession of the land;' to which he pretended to have a right. You oppressed the poor; but made no opposition to 'the mighty man; you rather favored his unjust claims.' Bp. Stock offers a very different interpretation, and supposes, that the expression 'Had the earth,' which he renders, 'To whom the ground was offered,' alludes to the seat of honor upon the carpet, spread on the ground, according to the known custom of the East.

9. *The arms of the fatherless have been broken.*]—The natural powers of the fatherless have been checked, suppressed, or destroyed.

11. *Abundance of waters cover thee.*]—This image appears to be taken from a drowning man in the act of sinking; or from a ship foundering at sea. Waters afford the sacred writers a favorite image for illustrating the force and overwhelming violence of affliction. Compare 2 Sam. xxii. 5; Ps. lxix. 1, 2, 15, 16; lxxiii. 10; xciii. 3; cxxiv. 4, 5.

14. *He walketh in the circuit of heaven.*]—He looks not through the mist and darkness that are interposed between earth and heaven; he neither knows nor cares for the things of this world; his wisdom and power are directed to much higher objects, and the sphere of his action is in the regions of the starry firmament.

16. *Were cut down.*]—Rather, 'were taken,' or 'apprehended,' as criminals are, for the purpose of being brought to justice. The Septuagint has *συνεληφθησαν*, 'were taken;' and the Vulgate, 'sublati sunt,' 'were carried off.' See note on

ch. xvi. 8; and on Wisd. iv. 10. There is probably an allusion here to the Noachic deluge.

17, 18. *What can the Almighty do for them, &c.*—Rather, ‘What does the Almighty usually do to them?’ That is, to such presumptuous sinners. The Hebrew future is here used as an aorist. The beginning of ver. 18, should be ‘Verily he filled,’ &c. For the last clause, see ch. xxi. 16.

19. *The righteous see it.*—‘It’ here refers to the just judgment of God as noticed ver. 15, 16.

20. *Whereas our substance, &c.*—I apprehend the translation should be,

‘Was not their rebellion punished with destruction?’

קִימָנוּ means ‘our rebellion.’ But, 1. On the authority of the Septuagint, Syriac, and Vulgate versions, we may read קִימָם, ‘their rebellion.’ 2. קִיִּם is rendered ‘obstinacy’ by the Syriac interpreter. It may signify ‘insurrection,’ or ‘rebellion;’ as קִימִים signifies ‘insurgents,’ or ‘rebels,’ Ps. iii. 1. lxxiv. 23.

נִכְחַר ‘was punished with destruction.’ It is englished, ‘to be cut off,’ chap. iv. 7.

אֶכְלֶה ‘shall consume.’ It is the preter tense turned into the future, by the influence of ו at the beginning of this clause. Besides, according to the remarks of Michaelis, the preterite and future were aorists in the ancient state of the Hebrew language. *Michaelis*, in *Prælect.* p. 78. 8vo.—*Scott*.

20. *But the remnant of them, &c.*—‘But the remnant of them the fire shall consume.’ Some interpreters apply these expressions to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. But how could the inhabitants of those cities be styled ‘the remnant,’ or all the remainder, of the wicked? Whereas, if we understand it of the wicked, that shall be found remaining on the earth at the end of the world, we are presented in this verse with the two most memorable and dreadful scenes of divine vengeance, the deluge, and the conflagration. Noah might learn the final destruction of the wicked from the prophecy of Enoch, recorded by Jude, ver. 14. and the manner of it from some revelation to himself.—*Id.*

21. *With him.*—That is, ‘with God.’

23. *Thou shalt be builded up.*—A metaphor taken from a house in ruins.

24. *Shalt thou lay up.*—He recommends to him a contempt of riches. But our translation makes him promise, that his avarice shall be gratified to the full. Mr. Heath’s version is more just to the original, ‘Count the fine gold as dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones, or pebbles, of the brooks.’ In this

interpretation, he follows Grotius, Cocceius, Schultens and others. Rosenmüller prefers the sense of our translation.

24. *Ophir.*]—The Ophir here spoken of must be that which was in Arabia, on the coast of the Red sea. Arabia had formerly its golden mines. We are assured by Sanchoniathon, says Mr. Crinsoz, that the Phœnicians carried on a considerable traffic to this Ophir even before the days of Job.—*Scott.*

25. *Yea, the Almighty, &c.*]—‘Yea, the Almighty shall be thy fine gold and choice silver unto thee.’ The verse thus translated contains a sublime sentiment. The favor of God shall be thy treasure, an inexhaustible mine of felicity. But there is no necessity for change. The Hebrew is תועפות ‘high-places;’ and these were always considered as places of security and defence. The metaphor is extremely common in the holy Scriptures; See *Cruden’s* Concordance.

29. This verse may be rendered, ‘When thou shalt say there is lifting up; that is, arrogance and pride, men are cast down: but the humble person he shall save.’

30. *He shall deliver, &c.*]—The obscurity of this verse will vanish, says Scott, if we turn it, ‘The innocent shall deliver a country, and it shall be delivered by the pureness of his hands.’ Men of exemplary piety and virtue are sometimes the saviours of a whole people, by means of their favor with God. This grand idea of the efficacy of true religion, and the vast utility of virtuous men, is derived from the patriarchal history. See Gen. xviii. 23, &c.

Bp. Stock renders it very differently. By connecting אי, which we render, ‘the island,’ with נקי, ‘the innocent,’ as one word, and considering the last *yod* as paragogic, he reads, ‘The mourner shall escape, and shall be rescued by the cleanness of thy hands.’ The radical is אנק, ‘to mourn,’ or cry as at a funeral. The words אי and נקי are united, and read as one, in twelve Hebrew copies.

CHAP. XXIII. VER. 2. *Even to-day is my complaint bitter.*]—The word מרי, which our translators render ‘bitter,’ is, by Crinsoz, Heath, and others, derived from מרה, to rebel. If this be admitted, the text, in an interrogative form, will be, ‘Still is my complaint rebellion?’

2. *Even to-day, &c.*]—Job intimates that the discussions, which had taken place between himself and his friends on former days, had not served to alleviate his sorrow; but that the ground of his complaint remained the same.

2. *My stroke.*]—It is literally in Hebrew ידי ‘My hand.’ The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, ‘His hand,’ and

must have translated from Hebrew copies that had **וַי**. The manuscript forms of the *vau* and the *yod* were, and still are easily confounded.

Admitting **וַי** to be the right reading, the sense will be, 'his power exerted in punishing me.' The Syriac version, and Chaldee paraphrase favor this interpretation.

7. *So should I be delivered for ever from my judge.*—Rather, 'So should I be for ever acquitted by my judge.'

8. *Behold, I go forward, &c.*—Job here reverts to the pious wish, which he expressed ver. 3.

10. *When he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.*—Rather, 'He is trying me, and I shall come forth as gold,' from the furnace, understood.

11. *And not declined.*—That is, not gone aside, or departed from it.

13. *He is in one mind.*—Our translators seem to have introduced injudiciously, and without any necessity, the two words *in* and *mind*, not considering that **בְּאַחַד** is here the ablative put for the nominative, as in Exod. xviii. 4. xxxii. 22. and elsewhere. This enallage in the Arabic language, it has been remarked, is very common. The text therefore should have been, 'But he is one,' as Montanus has rendered it in the margin of his Bible. From the unity of God, Job rightly infers, that his power and dominion are absolute; that the dispensations of his providence are not to be controlled; and that the wisdom which directs them, often appears to us inscrutable, 'and past finding out.'

16. *God maketh my heart soft.*—That is, 'He deprives me of fortitude and courage.' Or, 'He renders my heart susceptible of deep and lasting impressions,' in consequence of the afflictions, which he has brought upon me.

17. *The darkness.*—As 'light' is used in Scripture to signify wisdom, joy, prosperity, and happiness, so 'darkness' is an established metaphor to express ignorance, privation, grief, misfortune, and calamity.

17. *Neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.*—It should have been rendered, 'But he covereth the darkness from my face.' The term for 'darkness' here is, in the original, different from that in the former part of the verse. It is that by which Job expresses the darkness of the sepulchre, chap. x. 22. By 'covering the darkness from his face, therefore, he means his not being permitted to see death. God, he complains, denies him the only refuge from his sorrows, a grave.—See Scott, and Rosenmüller.

Doederlein reads, without a negative, which is supplied by

our translators, 'and because the darkness of misery is still before me, and overclouds my hopes.' So, equivalently, *Houbigant*.

CHAP. XXIV. VER. 1. *Why, seeing times, &c.*]—By 'times,' in this verse is meant the state of public morals among God's intelligent creatures, either in one particular country, or all over the world; and by 'his days,' we may understand those particular periods, when his justice thought fit to inflict on transgressors the signal marks of his vengeance. There may be an allusion in this verse to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, and to the universal deluge in the time of Noah.

2. *And feed thereof.*]—The original is 'and feed,' which we may understand transitively, and supply 'them' for its objective case. The text will then be, 'they take away the flocks, or lean cattle, and feed, or fatten them, for themselves.' The Septuagint has, Ποιμνιον σου ποιμενι αρπασαντες, 'having seized and carried away the shepherd with his flock.'

6. *Every one his corn.*]—That is, as the text at present stands, 'The portion of corn allotted him for his daily task.' But the Vulgate has, 'They reap a field that is not their own.' So, also, the Septuagint and Chaldee; who must, as Grotius observes, have separated the Hebrew expression בלילי, into two words, ליל and בל. See *Doederlein*, and compare, by way of illustration of the whole passage, Eccclus. xiii. 15—24.

7. *The naked.*]—Probably their children, see ver. 5; for it is more natural to suppose that the writer is here describing the hardships of the neighbouring slaves, than the excursions and ravages of the wild Arabs.

9. *They pluck, &c.*]—Here he resumes the subject of the cruelties and oppressions committed by the rich, which had been dropped in the fourth verse.

9. *And take a pledge from the poor.*]—He means 'from the poor man's back.' In other words, they deprive him of his upper garment. See note on Matt. v. 40.

10. *They take away the sheaf from the hungry.*]—Rather, 'The handfuls of corn, which the hungry poor had gleaned in the fields.'

11. *And tread their wine-presses, and suffer thirst.*]—The Hebrew verb signifies to labor at noon-day; and the clause should have been rendered, 'Who labor in their vineyards, at noon-day, and yet suffer thirst.' This was a grievous aggravation of the oppression. The vintage began in September. From the beginning of May to the end of September, the air in those countries is in general so hot, that it seems as if it came out of

an oven. What then must it be at noon-day?—See *Dr. Russell's Nat. Hist. of Aleppo*, p. 14.

Mr. Addison, in his Letter from Italy, describes the misery of the oppressed peasants with the same beautiful energy. The poor inhabitants of that rich country, he says,

Starve, in the midst of nature's bounty curst,
And in the loaden vineyard die for thirst.

12. *God layeth not folly to them.*]—The Septuagint reads interrogatively, 'Why does not God visit for these things?' Various derivations are offered of the word תפלה, here used. Whichever be admitted, the sense is nearly the same; that God seems to make no distinctions, nor to regard these cruel outrages.

15. *Disguiseth his face.*]—The Hebrew is, 'He putteth a covering upon his face.' This covering was probably the hood of the *burnoose*: so the Arabs call the cloak which they sometimes throw over their other garments; and which has a head or cowl to it. The Arab dress was in all likelihood the same in the days of Job as now; for these people are remarkable for not having changed their customs for these three thousand years.—See *Ockley's Preface to an Account of South-West Barbary*.

18. *He is swift as the waters, &c.*]—Perhaps we may be permitted to read this verse as follows: 'He is swift as the waters; he beholdeth not the way of the vineyards.' In other words, 'he never frequents those cultivated spots where men resort.' 'Their portion' (i. e. the portion of such men) 'is cursed in the earth.' Where the first 'he' may relate to the murderer, ver. 14, and the latter to the secret crime of the adulterer, ver. 15, who says, 'No eye shall see me;' who avoids the beaten paths of men, and of course never sees the way that leads to the vineyards. The last clause of the verse will then be a sort of denunciation on both these characters.

20. *The womb.*]—i. e. 'His own mother.'

20. *As a tree.*]—Rather, 'as a dry staff.' See the Lexicons on יבב, and compare Hos. iv. 12.

21. *He evil-entreateth, &c.*]—The want of some word of transition is one cause of the obscurity of this whole paragraph. We may translate, 'Another evil-entreateth,' &c. just as our translators supply the word *some* in ver. 2, 'Some remove the land-marks,' &c.—*Scott*.

22. *He riseth up, and no man is sure of life.*]—That is, when he riseth up to assassinate, no man's life is secure, however strong, careful, or courageous.

23. *Though it be given him, &c.*]—‘It is given (permitted) to him (the tyrant) to be in safety; whereon he resteth: and his eyes (the eyes of God) are upon their ways.’ It is usual with this writer to mention the Supreme Being in this abrupt manner. God, he says, suffers these wretches to continue in their prosperity, and seems an unconcerned spectator of their cruelties and oppressions.—*Scott*.

CHAP. XXV. VER. 2. *Him.*]—That is, ‘with God,’ who is often to be understood as the antecedent to the pronoun in this, and other poetical books of the Holy Scriptures.

2. *He maketh peace, &c.*]—Rather, ‘He causeth peace to reign without interruption in his high-places;’ i. e. ‘in the heavens,’ and among celestial beings, who far excel us in wisdom and power.

5. *Behold even to the moon.*]—‘Look even unto the moon; he counteth it not bright: and the stars are not clear in his eyes.’

So inconceivably holy is the Lord of Hosts, that he sees defilements even in the brightness of the firmament. Those living sapphires, before his majesty, lose their lustre: how much less man, who, in his fallen state, is as a worm that delights in putrefaction!—*Harvey*.

6. *A worm.*]—The last word in this verse is in Hebrew תולעה, which is very different from that used in the first clause, though englished the same. The latter is supposed to be the small insect, which the Arabians call ‘kermes.’ It sticks to some parts of trees, and supplies the principal ingredient in dying scarlet. Hence the Hebrew name of that color in Scripture is the same as that of the worm, *tholo*.—See *Bochart*.

6. *Which is a worm?*]—Rather, ‘which is covered with, or devoured, by worms.’ This seems to be an allusion to Job and his distressing malady, as Doederlein supposes. The Hebrew word in the former clause is רמה.

CHAP. XXVI. VER. 4. *To whom.*]—Rather, ‘Of whom hast thou uttered words?’ Or, ‘Whom didst thou wish to teach?’ Job repels the supposition of ignorance, respecting the things of which Bildad had been discoursing, with indignation. The whole address in the first four verses is sarcastic and ironical.

5. *Dead things, &c.*]—In this and the following verse, Job displays, in more glowing colors than Bildad could, the awful power of God, and his terrible kingdom in Sheol, the region of the dead; that is, ‘the grave,’ or ‘the mansions of departed souls.’ Scott’s translation of these two verses is,

The giants are in anguish under the waters, together with their families.

Sheol is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering.

Instead of 'are in anguish,' the Hebrew verb, יִהוּלָּלוּ, may be rendered 'groan,' or 'tremble with fear.'

By 'the giants' are supposed to be meant the wicked inhabitants of the old world, who perished in the flood. The Hebrew word is רִפְּאִים, from which tyrants and oppressors of every kind were called 'Rephaim;' not from their bulk, or stature; but on account of the terror, which their violence and rapacity caused. It is also often used to signify 'the dead.'—See *Taylor's Heb. Concord.* No. 1807; and *Rosenmüller*.

7. *The north.*]—Meaning the northern celestial hemisphere.

8. *He bindeth up the waters in his thick clouds; and the cloud, &c.*]—The two words in Hebrew, which are here rendered by one, are very different. Instead of 'the cloud,' in the latter part of the verse, it would be better, perhaps, to render עָנָן by 'the atmosphere.' The meaning is, 'The waters are so condensed and suspended in the clouds, that they do not fall in overwhelming torrents; but descend gently, so as to refresh the earth with showers of rain.'

9. *He holdeth back the face of his throne.*]—The canopy of the heavens, or the clear transparent sky, is styled in Scripture, 'the throne of God,' (Isa. lxvi. 1.) which when overspread with clouds, 'the face of his throne' may be said to be 'held back,' or concealed.

10. *He hath compassed, &c.*]—Rather, 'He hath described a circle on the face of the waters.' This seems to be an allusion to the natural, or sensible horizon, which from an eminence would appear circular, and might be mistaken for the limits of day and night. When the sun was in the meridian, it would appear as though the evening were commencing in the east, and the morning beginning to dawn in the west.

11. *The pillars of heaven.*]—It is the province of poetry to paint objects as they appear to the senses; and therefore the highest hills and mountains may seem to common observers 'the pillars of heaven;' or of the vaulted sky, which appears to rest on them.

12. *He divideth the sea.*]—The Septuagint reads Καταπαύει, 'he quieteth, or stilleth the sea.' The epithet 'proud,' in this verse, is supposed to be applicable not to man, but to the sea; and the verb מִדָּו rendered 'smiteth through,' implies the power of absolute control.

Scott reads, 'He dasheth together the proud waves,' and

such is Symmachus's translation of the verb מְהִיץ. Others understand by it, 'He gives motion to the sea,' referring it to the flux and reflux of the tide, as well as to the storms that are often raised by the wind.

13. *The crooked serpent.*]—It is surely a striking instance of the bathos to suppose, with some commentators, that the sublime author of this book should, in an instant, descend from 'garnishing the heavens,' to the formation of a reptile, a crocodile, or any other animal. We may with much more consistency and propriety understand by it the immense constellation called by Milton 'Ophiuchus huge, that fires the Arctic sky.' See, also, *Virgil*, *Georg.* i. 244. Besides, the text thus rendered, affords an instance of those parallelisms, which Bp. Lowth has noticed as being so common in the Hebrew poetry. See note on ch. xxxviii. 32.

14. *But the thunder of his power.*]—It should be, 'And the thunder of his power.' This seems to be an Hebraism, by which we may understand 'the power of his thunder,' or his 'powerful thunder.' In those early ages, when the phænomena of nature were little understood, when thunder was regarded as the awful voice of God, and when we consider the tremendous violence and ravages of thunder-storms in Arabia, we may naturally expect to find it introduced in this sublime chapter, as one exemplification of the divine power.

CHAP. XXVII. VER. 1. *His parable.*]—That is, his sublime, poetical address. The word מָשַׁל 'Mashal,' here, and in other places rendered 'Parable,' seems to have been the general term for any composition in Hebrew poetry, that is grave, figurative and sententious. Thus, the Proverbs of Solomon are called מִשְׁלֵי. The sublime predictions of Balaam (*Num.* xxiii. 7, 18; xxiv. 3, 15.) are designated by the same term, as are also Job's last speeches to his three friends. See *Bp. Lowth*, *Prælect.* iv.

2. *Who hath taken away my judgment.*]—Rather, 'Who hath put off my trial,' 'refused to hear my cause;' or 'deprived me of that just judgment, which is my due.'

5. *That I should justify you.*]—That is, give a sanction to your principles and opinions.

7. *Let mine enemy, &c.*]—Job means any one, who opposes him in this severe trial of his principles.

8. *His soul.*]—That is, his breath, or life.

10. *Will he delight, &c.*]—Rather, 'Did he delight himself in the Almighty, did he always call upon God?' In the primitive state of the Hebrew language, it has been remarked, that the future and preterite tenses may be considered as aorsts, and ought to be rendered as the sense requires.

11. *The hand of God.*]—‘The hand of God’ here seems to mean the actual exercise of his justice and power on earth.

12. *Vain.*]—False, hollow, and deceitful.

15. *Shall be buried in death.*]—Or, ‘by death;’ that is, they shall not be buried at all. ‘The dead shall bury their dead.’ The Chaldee paraphrase reads, ‘They shall be buried in the pestilence.’

15. *His widows.*]—Not merely the widow of the impious father; but the widows of all his sons that survived him. See *Rosenmüller*.

16. *Prepare raiment as the clay.*]—D’Herbelot tells us (p. 208) that Bokhten, an illustrious poet of Cufah in the ninth century, had so many presents made him in the course of his life, that at his death he was found possessed of an hundred complete suits of clothes, two hundred shirts, and five hundred turbans; an indisputable proof of the frequency with which presents of this kind are made in the Levant to men of study; and, at the same time, a fine illustration of Job’s description of the treasures of the east in his days, consisting of raiment as well as silver.

18. *As a moth.*]—The moth, by eating into the garment wherein it makes its habitation, destroys its own dwelling.

Wretch as a moth that ravages the looms,

Weaves her frail bower, and as she weaves consumes.—*Scott*.

18. *As a booth that the keeper maketh.*]—This was a temporary shelter formed of boughs and reeds to keep off the violent heat of the summer; and ‘the keeper’ was the boy, or servant, who guarded the fruit and the corn, when nearly ripe, from the birds and other creatures that would destroy it. As soon as the harvest, or vintage, was over, this booth was pulled down, or suffered to perish of itself. Dr. Shaw informs us, that this custom of erecting booths in the corn-fields and vineyards still prevails in Barbary. See Isa. i. 8. Lam. ii. 6.

19. *He shall not be gathered.*]—The heathens had a notion, that the souls of such persons as had not had the due rites of burial paid them, were not admitted into Hades; but that their ghosts were forced to wander a hundred years about the banks of the Styx. Hence we find the ghost of Patroclus supplicating Achilles to give him his funeral rites. ‘Bury me,’ says he, ‘that I may pass as soon as possible through the gates of Hades.’ So speaks Palinurus in Virgil; ‘Throw upon me some earth, that at last I may obtain rest in death, in quiet habitations.’ Here the self-conceited philosopher smiles at the rite of sprinkling the body with dust; but this, although misunderstood, and tinged with the fabulous, was borrowed from the Hebrew nation.

‘To gather,’ denotes, with relation to the dead, the bringing of their souls to Paradise. Although this cannot be effected by mortals, yet they expressed the benevolent wish that it might be so. On the other hand, Job says of the rich man, ‘he shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered.’ In the ages which followed, the performance of this rite was termed ‘sealing.’ Of this we have a remarkable instance in the second book of Esdras: ‘Wheresoever thou findest the dead, seal them and bury them;’ that is, express the benevolent prayer which is in use among the Jews to this day: ‘May he be in the bundle of life! May his portion be in Paradise, and also in that future world which is reserved for the righteous!’ It would also appear that in ‘sealing’ a corpse, they either wrote upon the head with ink, or simply traced with the finger the form of ‘Le-Novah.’ This, in reality, could make no difference in the state of the deceased, but it expressed their desire that such a person might be among those ‘who are written unto life.’ From a passage in Isaiah it appears, that persons were accustomed to mark on the hand, with indelible ink, the words, ‘Le-Novah,’ the contracted form of this sentence, ‘I am the Lord’s.’ This agrees with what Rabbi Simeon says, ‘The perfectly just are sealed, and in the moment of death are conveyed to Paradise.’ This sealing St. Paul applies, as far as wishes can go, to Onesiphorus. ‘May the Lord grant to Onesiphorus, that he may obtain mercy of the Lord in that day! As many,’ says the apostle, ‘as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and upon the Israel of God!’ (Gal. vi. 16.)

Such being marked in death with the expression ‘belonging to the Lord,’ explains this sentence, ‘the foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this *seal*, the Lord knoweth them that are his.’ ‘Hurt not the earth, nor the trees,’ says the angel in the book of Revelation, ‘until we have *sealed* the servants of our God in their foreheads.’ This seal, we are told, is their father’s name; that is, ‘Le-Novah,’ the Lord’s, alluding to the Old Testament form. This name, Christ says, he himself writes, and, by doing so, acts the part of the ‘Kedosh-Israel,’ opening where none can shut. This sealing, then, is taking them off by death, and placing them in his father’s house; for, after they are so sealed, we find them before the throne, ‘hungering and thirsting no more,’ and the Lamb in the midst of them, and leading them forth into pastures.

St. Paul improves upon this ancient rite. Men can, in sealing, go no farther than wishes, but the spirit of God can do more. ‘Ye are *sealed* by the spirit, until the day of redemption;’ that is, what others of old may have done symbolically, he will do in reality; he will write upon you, ‘Le-Novah.’

This is a seal which no power can erase; it will last until the day of redemption. So, in another place, he says, 'Ye are sealed with the holy spirit of promise.' Now the seal 'Le-Novah,' the Lord's, not only says they are his, but it is also their memorial through the hidden period, that he will appear, and receive them unto himself; and in this way the seal itself has in it the nature of a promise.—*Bennett's View of the Intermediate State*, p. 353—356.

Houbigant, Heath, and others, by a slight alteration of the text, substituting $\eta\delta$ for $\eta\delta\alpha$, read, instead of 'He shall not be gathered,' 'He shall lie down no more.' So also, equivalently, the Septuagint.

After all, it is probable the words 'he shall not be gathered,' mean only, 'he shall not be gathered unto his fathers,' in the usual language of Scripture. In other words, 'He shall not be buried, with funeral honors, in the costly tomb of his ancestors; but be neglected and disgraced after death.'

19. *He openeth his eyes, and he is not.*]—Taking the verb impersonally, we may read, 'In the twinkling of an eye, he is no more;' or 'is completely forgotten.' See note on Is. xxxvii. 36.

20. *As waters.*]—That is, as suddenly, and with as much violence, as waters rushing from the mountains.

21. *The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth; and as a storm hurleth him out of his place.*]—The ancients were persuaded that some persons were carried away by storms and whirlwinds. Homer gives us an instance of this, making one exclaim,

Snatch me, ye whirlwinds, far from human race,

Toss'd through the void illimitable space.—*Odys. b. xx.*

See, also, Isaiah xli. 16. Though, perhaps, by 'the east wind,' we are here to understand one of those pestilential blasts, that are so common in the deserts of Arabia. The Vulgate and Septuagint support this conjecture. The common characteristic of the east wind is, that it is violent and pernicious.

22. *God shall cast upon him.*]—Rather, 'Shall rush on him;' for, according to Heath, Scott, and other critics, the agent in this and the following verse is not *God* and *man*, which are supplied by our translators, but 'the east wind,' which is here personified; and, in the boldest style of Oriental poetry, made to exhibit gestures of scorn, and to utter the hissings of contempt. Agreeably to this interpretation, it should have been (ver. 23.) 'He shall clap his hands,' &c.

22. *He would fain flee out of his hand.*]—‘He would fain escape from his avenging power.’

CHAP. XXVIII. The connection between this chapter and the last is not apparent.

2. *Brass is molten out of the stone.*]—This must have been different from our modern factitious metal of the same name. Pliny informs us, that it was procured from a stone called *cádmia*; and from another stone, which they call *chalcites*, in Cyprus, where the manner of making brass was first invented.

3. *He setteth an end to darkness, &c.*]—‘The stones of darkness,’ and the ‘shadow of death,’ must surely mean the metallic ore in the deep and dark parts of the earth. The agent, then, who searcheth them out, must be man. He also it is, whose power and presumption ‘setteth an end to darkness;’ that is, he contracts its bounds, by carrying light into the subterraneous caverns when he works the mines. See *Doederlein*.

3. *He searcheth out all perfection, &c.*]—Or, as Cocceius more clearly translates the original, לְכָל-תְּכֵלִית, ‘He searcheth to every extremity the stones of darkness,’ &c. That is, he follows the vein of metallic ore as far as it goes.

4. *The flood, &c.*]—This is excessively obscure. By the assistance of Cocceius and Schultens, we gain a more intelligible translation, agreeing happily with the context:

He breaketh up the valley, near the bottom of the mountain:

They are forgotten of the foot:

They sink down; they wander from men.

The first word, ‘he breaketh up,’ denotes opening the ground for a passage into the mine.

The place is marked in the next words, ‘the valley near the bottom of the mountain.’

The manner of going down into the mine is intimated by that poetical expression, ‘they are forgotten of the foot.’ They do not descend by their feet; but are let down by ropes, or in baskets.

The depth of the descent, and their gradual disappearance, are described in the third sentence, ‘they sink down.’

And by the last sentence, ‘they wander from men,’ may be meant their winding progress in the subterraneous passages, according to the course of the metallic vein.—*Scott*.

By others, ‘the flood’ mentioned in the beginning of this verse, is thought to mean the sudden rush of water, which miners often experience; and the latter part of the verse may relate to the contrivances, which they have formed to get rid

of it, by means of canals, &c. By rendering the Hebrew word רגל 'track,' or 'course,' instead of 'foot,' the expression of the 'flood forgetting its course,' will poetically signify its being diverted into a different channel by the labor of the miner. Instead of 'breaketh out from the inhabitant,' we may render, 'breaketh in upon the inhabitant,' meaning the person who is working the mine. See *Noldius*, and the Lexicons on עָצָה compounded with נָ.

5. *As it were fire.*]—That is, precious stones as bright as fire; such as rubies, &c.

10. *Every precious thing.*]—'Under ground,' or 'in the bowels of the earth,' understood.

11. *He bindeth the floods from overflowing.*]—This may allude to the labor and ingenuity of men, who, in working mines, drain off, or stop up the water, and prevent it from overflowing them.

14. *The depth.*]—תְּהוֹם As this is distinguished from the sea, and very different from עֵינַן, it probably refers to that vast abyss of subterraneous waters, which is supposed to be formed round the centre of the earth.

21. *The fowls of the air.*]—The sight of birds, particularly those of the eagle kind, is extremely penetrating and acute.

22. *Destruction and death say, &c.*]—Destruction and death must mean 'the dead.' Those who have been destroyed, and those who have died a natural death. The generation of men, says Job, who have lived before us, and are now gone to the regions of the dead, these have told us, 'we have heard the hearing thereof with our ears;' i. e. we have had something relating to this question about wisdom handed down to us by tradition from our fore-fathers. This must be the meaning, from the great regard which is paid by every speaker, in every speech, to what was taught them by their ancestors.—See *Peters*.

Bp. Stock understands the text differently. His translation is,

Destruction and death affirm,
With our ears we have heard the report of it.

Thus, also, Homer speaks with respect to the heroes in the Trojan war;

Ἡμεῖς δὲ κλέος οἶον ἀκροῦμεν, ἅδε τι ἰδμεν. IL. ii. 486.

'Whose fame alone we have heard, but nothing know.'

Rosenmüller thinks that by 'Destruction and death,' are here meant the regions of the dead.

25, 26. *To make the weight for the winds, &c.*]—The winds, the waters, the different kinds of vapor, the clouds, rain, light-

ning, and thunder, are here specified, to exemplify the divine wisdom and power, by which the elements are poised, adjusted, and kept distinct; and by which the great agents of nature are made to perform their respective functions.

CHAP. XXIX. VER. 3. *When his candle shined upon my head.*]—The tents of princes are frequently illuminated, as a mark of honor and dignity. Norden tells us, (part ii. p. 45) that the tent of the bey of Girge was distinguished from the other tents by forty lanterns suspended before it, in the form of chequer-work. If this was the custom formerly, it is possible that these words of Job might have a reference to it. ‘Oh that it were with me as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when his candle shone upon mine head,’ (when I returned prosperous from expeditions against the enemies of my tribe, and had my tent adorned with lamps) ‘and I passed through the night by the light of it!’

The houses of Egypt, according to Maillet, are never without lights in the night-time. If such were the ancient custom not only of Egypt, but of the neighbouring countries of Judea and Arabia, it will strongly illustrate this passage. Mr. Scott, however, thinks that there is probably an allusion to the lamps, which hung from the ceiling of the banqueting-rooms of the wealthy Arabs; not unlike what Virgil mentions in the palace of Dido.

—Dependent lychni laquearibus aureis
Incensi.

ÆN. 1. 730.

‘From gilded roofs, depending lamps display
Nocturnal beams that imitate the day.’—DRYDEN.

Others may be of opinion, that the text is only a metaphorical expression signifying a manifestation of God’s favor.

4. *In the days of my youth.*]—The Hebrew is *בְּיָמַי חֹרֶף*, which may be rendered ‘in the days of my autumn;’ that is, in the happiest period of my life. In eastern countries, the autumn is the pleasantest season of the year; for then the heat abates, the rain refreshes the earth, and its fruits are in perfection.—See *Schultens*, and *Castell. Lex.*

4. *When the secret of God was upon my tabernacle.*]—The Vulgate reads, ‘when God was secretly in my tabernacle,’ and the Septuagint, ‘when God visited my dwelling.’ So, also, equivalently, the Syriac and Arabic versions. The meaning, therefore, evidently is, when God favored him, and when he was prosperous and happy.

6. *When I washed my steps with butter.*]—A poetical expression denoting an abundance of the thing here specified.—See *Doederlein*.

6. *The rock poured me out rivers of oil.*]—This is supposed to allude to the olives, which thrive best when planted in the crevices of rocks, on the sides of mountains. But a more probable interpretation is, that the Hebrew word צור, the rock, or stone, here means ‘the olive-press;’ in the same manner as a cheese-press, in our western countries, is called ‘a stean,’ the old English word for ‘a stone,’ which is used as the chief power, or means of pressure.

7. *When I prepared my seat in the street!*]—Job here speaks of himself as a civil magistrate, as a judge upon the bench, who had a seat erected for him to sit on whilst he was hearing and trying causes. This was set up in the street, in the open air, before the gate of the city, where great numbers might be convened, and hear and see justice administered. The Arabs to this day hold their courts of justice in an open place, under the heavens, as in a field, or a market-place.—See Norden’s *Travels in Egypt*, vol. ii. p. 140.

Sitting upon a cushion is an expression of honor; and preparing a seat for a person of distinction seems to mean, laying things of this kind on a place where such a one is to sit. Chardin says, ‘It is the custom of Asia for persons in common not to go into the shops of that country, which are mostly small, but there are wooden seats on the outside, where people sit down; and if it happens to be a man of quality, they lay a cushion there. The people of quality cause carpets and cushions to be carried every where that they like, in order to repose themselves on them more agreeably.’ It is extremely natural then to suppose, that Job sent his servants to lay a cushion, or a carpet, on one of the public seats, or some such place. Eli’s seat by the way-side, (1 Sam. iv. 13.) was a seat adorned, we may suppose, after the same manner.

8. *And hid themselves.*]—From motives of reverence and shame; or for fear of his just rebuke.

8. *The aged arose, and stood up.*]—This is a most elegant description, and correctly exhibits that great reverence and respect, which was paid even by the old and decrepit, to the holy man in passing along the streets, or when he sat in public. They not only rose, which in men so old and infirm was a great mark of distinction, but they stood; they continued to do it, though even the attempt was attended with difficulty.—*Bp. Lowth’s Lect.* vol. ii. p. 412.

11. *It gave witness to me.*]—It testified gratitude, approbation, and pleasure.

14. *And it clothed me.*]—That is, ‘it formed the constant moral habit and distinction of my character.’ This metaphor,

derived from the exterior dress, and applied to the qualities and endowments of the mind, is extremely frequent in the language of Scripture. Compare Ps. xciii. 1; civ. 1; cxxxii. 16, 18; Is. lix. 17; 1 Pet. v. 5; Col. iii. 12, 14.

14. *My judgment was as a robe, &c.*]—His decisions in the court of justice procured him all the honor given to a king, without the regal dress and title. This beautiful manner of speaking is still preserved among the Arabs. One of their proverbs is, ‘Knowledge is a diadem to a young person, and a chain of gold about his neck.’—*Scott*.

17. *I brake the jaws of the wicked, &c.*]—A poetical allusion to the fierceness and rapacity of those who resembled a beast of prey. Job disarmed them of their power to commit acts of violence and injustice.

18. *I shall die in my nest.*]—Security and uninterrupted repose are the ideas here presented to the mind. Schultens justly remarks, that the image is borrowed from the eagle, who, it is well known, builds her nest on the summit of the highest rocks.

19. *My root was spread out by the waters.*]—This image not only denotes prosperity and pleasure; but likewise fecundity, and a numerous offspring. See the parallel texts.

19. *The dew lay all night upon my branch.*]—It is well known, that in hot, eastern countries, where it seldom rains during the summer months, the copious dews which fall there during the night contribute greatly to the nourishment of vegetables in general. ‘This dew,’ says Hasselquist, speaking of the excessively hot weather in Egypt, ‘is particularly serviceable to the trees, which would otherwise never be able to resist the heat; but with this refreshment they thrive well and blossom, and ripen their fruit.’—*Travels*, p. 455.

20. *My bow was renewed in my hand.*]—The bow was a favorite image with the Orientalists. It was one of the principal instruments of annoyance and defence; and it afforded the wandering Arab not only amusement, but the means of subsistence. Considering it in this light, we may understand it here as the emblem of power.

22. *My speech dropped upon them.*]—This metaphor expresses the gentleness of his wisdom, and the pleasure with which it was received. The following verse sufficiently explains the sense.

24. *If I laughed on them.*]—Rather, ‘If I laughed at them.’

24. *The light of my countenance they cast not down.*]—According to the Hebrew idiom, ‘to lift up the light of the countenance,’ means to shew favor: to cast it down therefore, or to

cause it to fall, must signify 'to provoke displeasure;' or 'to be out of favor.'

25. *I chose out their way.*—I pointed out to them what plan of life, or what particular conduct they ought to pursue, when in any difficulty or doubt.

25. *As one that comforteth the mourners.*—This clause, says Scott, may mean animating his troops, when they were dispirited; or, in a larger and more noble sense, being the father of his people, consoling them under their distresses, and ever ready to cherish and protect them.

CHAP. XXX. VER. 1. *With the dogs of my flock.*—If from this text, in which all the ancient versions agree, we may infer, that dogs were trained to guard and keep flocks, it will fix the date of this poem much later than it is now generally supposed to be. But, as the characters and conditions of men are frequently denoted in Scripture by the names of such animals as they are supposed to resemble, we may understand that Job, by 'the dogs of his flock,' means the lowest kind of servants; such as were employed in watching and feeding his herds and flocks. See note on 2 Kings viii. 13.

2. *In whom old age was perished.*—The meaning probably is, that the very last period of usefulness in old age was with them past and gone. In other words, they neither possessed strength, nor the benefits of experience. Bp. Stock, by a slight alteration, changing אָבָר to אָבַר, reads, 'Over them old age had spread the wing.' But what does this mean?

3. *For want and famine they were solitary.*—'Solitary from want and famine.'

4. *Who cut up mallows by the bushes, and juniper-roots for their meat.*—Biddulph (Collection of Voyages and Travels from the library of the Earl of Oxford, p. 807.) says, he 'saw many poor people gathering mallows and three-leaved grass, and asked them what they did with it: they answered, it was all their food; and that they boiled it, and eat it. Then we took pity on them, and gave them bread; which they received very joyfully, and blessed God that there was bread in the world.'

5. *They were driven forth from among men.*—They were expelled from the society of their fellow-creatures.

5. *They cried after them.*—That is, 'There was a cry after them.'

10. *To spit in my face.*—Rather, 'to spit in my presence,' which was considered as a mark of insult and contempt.

11. *Because he hath loosed my cord.*—That is, because God hath destroyed my power. Chains, bands, and cords, in the

Hebrew idiom, denoted political authority; because, perhaps, they were used as instruments of coercion and punishment. Or, the allusion may be to the striking of a tent, which is stretched out with cords. See the parallel text.

11. *They have also let loose the bridle before me.*—‘They have thrown off all the restraint which was formerly imposed on them.’

12. *They push away my feet, &c.*—The sense seems to require that we should transpose these words, and read, ‘They raise up against me the ways of their destruction;’ that is, the destruction which they have contrived; ‘and push, or force, my feet into them.’

13. *They mar my path.*—A metaphorical expression, signifying that they deprived him of the power of acting as he liked. Paths, ways, and walking, in Scripture language, frequently mean an habitual course of life, or those practical principles which direct it.

13. *They have no helper.*—Rather, ‘There is no helper for me;’ or, ‘they need no assistance to aggravate my misery;’ which Job’s persecuting friends were at all times ready to give.

16. *My soul is poured out upon me.*—‘My soul melteth within me.’—*Houbigant*. See Ps. xlii. 4.

Pococke informs us, that the Arabians call a fearful person, one who hath a watery heart, or whose heart melts away like water.

18. *My coat.*—Rather, ‘my vest,’ or ‘tunic,’ as distinguished from the loose, upper garment just mentioned.

22. *Thou liftest me up to the wind; thou causest me to ride upon it, and dissolvest my substance.*—Among other interpretations given of this passage, the editor of Calmet’s Dictionary refers to a sand-storm, and justifies the application of such an idea by the following extract from Mr. Bruce, whose authority, however, must always be admitted with caution.

On the 14th, at seven in the morning, we left Assa Hagga, our course being due north. At one o’clock, we alighted among some acacia-trees at Waadi el Halboub, having gone twenty-one miles. We were here at once surprised and terrified by a sight surely one of the most magnificent in the world. In that vast expanse of desert from W. and to N. W. of us, we saw a number of prodigious pillars of sand at different distances, at times moving with great celerity, at others stalking on with a majestic slowness; at intervals we thought they were coming in a very few minutes to overwhelm us; and small quantities of sand did actually more than once reach us. Again they would retreat so as to be almost out of sight, their tops reaching

to the very clouds; their tops often separate from the bodies; and these, once disjoined, dispersed in the air, and did not appear more. Sometimes they were broke near the middle, as if struck with a large cannon-shot. About noon they began to advance with considerable swiftness upon us, the wind being very strong at north. Eleven of them ranged alongside of us at about the distance of three miles. The greatest diameter of the largest appeared to me at that distance as if they would measure ten feet. They retired from us with a wind at S. E. leaving an impression on my mind to which I can give no name, though surely one ingredient in it was fear, with a considerable deal of wonder and astonishment. It was in vain to think of flying; the swiftest horse, or fastest-sailing ship, could be of no use to carry us out of this danger: and the full persuasion of this riveted me as if to the spot where I stood, and let the camels gain on me so much in my state of lameness, that it was with some difficulty I could overtake them. *Travels, vol. iv. p. 558.*

If this quotation be allowed to explain the imagery used by Job, we see a magnificence in it not before apparent. We see how Job's dignity might be exalted in the air, might rise to great grandeur, importance, and even terror, in the sight of beholders; might ride upon the wind, which bears it about, causing it to advance, or to recede; and, after all, when the wind diminishes, this pillar of sand might disperse into the undistinguished level of the desert. This comparison seems to be precisely adapted to the mind of an Arab, who must have seen, or have been informed of, similar phenomena in the countries around him.

Rosenmüller supposes, with more probability, that the imagery is borrowed from a cloud floating through the atmosphere with the wind, till at last it dissolves into rain, and is seen no more.

23. *For I know, &c.*]—Scott thinks that Job here expresses a firm persuasion that his disease would prove mortal; and that he begs, in the next verse, for a mitigation of his tortures, and an easy death. In the 25th verse, he supposes that the wretched sufferer urges his petition for that mercy, by the compassion which he himself had always felt for the wretched; but Job may, with more probability, be supposed to dwell only on general truths, and to rest on the certainty of death, at no very distant period, as the lot of mortality, for consolation and peace.

23. *Death, and to the house appointed for all living.*]—Those expressions, in which the grave is described as 'the house appointed for all living,' the 'long home' of man, and 'the everlasting habitation,' are capable of much illustration from an-

tiquity. Montfaucon says, 'We observed, in the fifth volume of our antiquities, a tomb styled 'quietorium,' a resting-place.' Quiescere, to rest, is often said of the dead in epitaphs. Thus we find in an ancient writer a man speaking of his master, who had been long dead and buried, *cujus ossa bene quiescant*, 'may his bones rest in peace.' We have an instance of the like kind in an inscription in Gruter, (p. 696) and in another, (p. 594) 'fecit sibi requietorium,' 'he made himself a resting-place.'

This resting-place is called frequently an 'eternal house.' 'In his life-time he built himself an eternal house,' says one epitaph. 'He made himself an eternal house with his patrimony,' says another. 'He thought it better, (says another) to build himself an eternal house, than to desire his heirs to do it.' The ancients thought it a misfortune, when the bones and ashes of the dead were removed from their places, as imagining that they suffered something by the removal. This notion occasioned all those precautions used for the safety of their tombs, and the curses pronounced on those who removed them.—*Burder's Orient. Cust.*

24. *He will not stretch out his hand to the grave, though they cry in his destruction.*—The meaning of this obscure verse seems to be, 'He will not extend his judgments, or his punishments, to the grave, though they (the worthless persecutors described in the former part of this chapter) cry, or shout, in *his* destruction;' that is, in the destruction which he brings upon me; or of which he is the author. 'To stretch out the hand,' being a preparatory act for inflicting punishment, is an expression often taken for punishment itself.

27. *My bowels boiled.*—A metaphorical expression denoting extreme agitation and distress of mind.

27. *Prevented me.*—This word is used in the classical sense, and signifies 'went before me.'

28. *Without the sun.*—'In obscurity.'

29. *I am a brother, &c.*—The Orientalists, by this expression, denoted affinity in circumstances and disposition, as well as in blood. The text is equivalent to 'I am an outcast from human society, and an associate, or companion, with such creatures only as live in solitude and deserts.'

29. *Dragons—owls.*—Dragons—owls, or ostriches. See the marginal reading. The Hebrew name which is translated dragons is *tannim*, or *tannin*, and *tannot*. What species of animal is intended by it, has not yet been determined with certainty. Its being coupled with the ostrich here, and in several other places, shews it to be an inhabitant of the desert. It is ex-

pressly called so, Mal. i. 3, 'The dragons of the wilderness;' where by the wilderness are meant the deserts of Arabia Petræa, the country of Esau, and of Job. It also is a creature that has a mournful voice, Micah i. 8, 'I will wail and howl; I will make a wailing like the dragons, and mourning as the owls.' Lastly, the female has breasts and suckles her young; Lamentations iv. 3. Our translators, sensible that the description there cannot agree with the dragon, render it a sea-monster. 'Even the sea-monsters (*tannin*) draw out the breast, they give suck to their young ones: the daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness.' The ingenious Dr. Shaw is of opinion, that *tannim*, *tannin*, and *tannot*, are to be taken for jackals; which make a hideous howling in the night.

29. *Owls.*]—In the margin, 'ostriches.' The Hebrew term is *benot jaanah*, the daughters of vociferation. The males are called *jaanim*, (Lament. iv. 3.) which our translators render 'ostriches.' Dr. Shaw was an ear-witness to the hideous noises which ostriches make in the night: 'During the lonesome part of the night,' says that entertaining traveller, 'they often made very doleful and hideous noises; which would sometimes be like the roaring of a lion: at other times, it would bear a nearer resemblance to the hoarser voice of other quadrupeds, particularly to that of the bull and the ox. I have often heard them groan, as if they were in the greatest agonies.'—Travels, p. 450—455, 4to.—Scott.

30. *My skin is black.*]—See notes on Joel ii. 6; and Nahum ii. 10.

31. *My organ.*]—Rather, 'my pipe,' an instrument expressive of mirth and hilarity.

CHAP. XXXI. VER. 1. *I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?*]—The verb which is here translated, 'why should I think,' may be rendered, why should I look wistfully, or with an eye of desire? The verse, perhaps, would be better, out of the interrogative form, thus; 'I made a covenant with mine eyes, that I would not look, with an eye of desire, on a maid;' agreeably to the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and other ancient versions. Job means to say that he guarded against the first intrusion of impure thoughts, and the earliest incitements to seduction. Mr. Heath, however, is of opinion, that the translation is improper, and that the whole passage, as appears from the following verses, has a reference to a particular species of idolatry. The word בתולה 'Betulè,' which we render 'a maid,' or 'virgin,' he considers as the name of an idol. Eusebius informs us, from Sanchoniathon, that Ouranos

was the first introducer of 'Baitulia,' when he erected animated stones, which Bochart supposes should have been rendered rather 'anoointed stones.' The custom of anointing pillars, we know, was very ancient; for Jacob set up a pillar and anointed it, we read, and called it **בַּת אֱלֹהִים**. These stones, or pillars, were afterwards converted to idolatrous uses; and it was one of the commands to the children of Israel to break them to pieces, on their entrance into the land of Canaan. See Exod. xxxiv. 13. These idols, which were at first only rude stones, or pillars, were in process of time made to resemble a variety of animals; and one of the favorite forms was that of a virgin. —See Bochart, Phaleg, part ii. book ii. chap. ii.

2, 3. *For what portion, &c.*]—'For what is the allotment from God, and the inheritance from the Almighty in heaven? Is it not destruction to the unjust, and ruin to the workers of iniquity?'—Bp. Stock.

7. *If—mine heart walked after mine eyes.*]—'If the sight of mine eyes have usually kindled sinful passions in my heart.'

9. *If mine heart have been deceived by a woman.*]—Rather, 'If mine heart has been allured by, or 'towards' another man's wife.' It is the same word in Hebrew, which is translated 'wife' in the next verse.

10. *Let my wife grind unto another.*]—The classical scholar, who recollects the

'Alienas permolere uxores'

of Horace, (Lib. i. Sat. 2. 34.) and is acquainted with the construction of the ancient hand-mill, will have no doubt as to the meaning of this metaphorical expression. See, also, *Ausonii* Epig. lxxi. 6. The modest periphrasis of the Septuagint is, *Ἀρεσσαι ἀπα καὶ ἡ γυνὴ μὲς ἑτέρῳ*, 'Let my wife please, or gratify another.'

14. *When God riseth up.*]—That is, when God riseth up to pronounce judgment. This phraseology is taken from courts of justice, in which it is usual for judges to stand up when they pass sentence.

16. *If I have withheld the poor from their desire.*]—'If I have withheld from the poor what they needed;' or 'the object of their desire.'

16. *The eyes of the widow to fail.*]—See note on chap. xvii. 5.

18. *For from my youth, &c.*]—Heath reads, 'If from his youth I brought him not up as a father, yea I guided her from her mother's womb,' referring both to the male and female orphan. Or, perhaps, the latter clause refers to the widow, ver. 16, and should be, as our translators have it, 'I have guided her

from her mother's womb;' that is, 'I felt compassion for her, and was disposed to assist her, from my earliest youth.'

20. *His loins.*]—Equivalent to 'his heart;' or else it means the offspring of his loins, that is, 'his children.'

21. *When I saw my help in the gate.*]—He means his influence and authority in the court of judicature where he presided. 'Help' is used by a frequent idiom, for 'means of help.'

22. *Then let mine arm, &c.*]—These shocking effects are said to happen sometimes in the last stage of elephantiasis. Vid. *Aretæum*, ubi supra.

23. *I could not endure.*]—Or 'I could do nothing.' See *Rosenmüller*.

27. *My mouth hath kissed my hand.*]—Pitts has told us, that the Mohammedans begin their worship by bringing their two thumbs together, and kissing them three times, and at every kiss touching their foreheads with their thumbs. When they cannot kiss the hand of a superior, they kiss their own, and put it to their foreheads. They venerate an unseen being, whom they cannot touch, in much the same manner. If Job, therefore, had kissed his hand on this occasion, it would evidently have been an act of idolatrous worship.

31. *If the men of my tabernacle, &c.*]—He appeals to his own domestics for his bounty towards them and liberality to all others. Ikenius, quoted by Schultens, has given the clearest translation of this verse: 'If the men of my tabernacle do not say, Who can produce a person not satisfied from his flesh? that is, from his provisions.' The Chaldee interpreter understood it in the same manner, 'Who cutteth of his flesh, or meat, unsatisfied?'—*Scott*.

32. *The stranger, &c.*]—His family, he says, were witnesses of his hospitality. This virtue was, and still is, the national character of the Arabs. They value themselves upon it as their highest glory. One of their poets expresses himself very warmly on this subject: 'How often, when echo gave me notice of a stranger's approach, have I stirred my fire that it might give a clear blaze! I flew to him as to a prey, through fear that my neighbours should get possession of him before me.' The echo, here mentioned, refers to the practice of a stranger who travels in Arabia by night. He imitates the barking of a dog, and thus sets all the curs in the neighbourhood a barking; whereupon the people rush out from all parts, striving who shall get the stranger for his guest.—*Id.*

33. *As Adam.*]—The Chaldee paraphrast very justly understands him here to appeal to God for the honesty of the defence which he had been making. 'If I have covered my trans-

gressions before him like Adam.' Adam, when called to by God to give account of what he had done, endeavoured to palliate his crime. But how did Job come to the knowledge of that transaction? Adam might relate it to Methuselah, into whose times he lived. From Methuselah the tradition might pass to Noah, then to Shem; from Shem to Abraham, and so to the several branches of the Abrahamic family; from which the three friends of Job descended, and probably Job himself.—*Scott*.

The Hebrew has no necessary reference to Adam, our first progenitor; who did not attempt to 'cover,' or conceal, his transgression. See the marginal reading, which is agreeable to the Vulgate, the Syriac, and Arabic versions.

34. *Did I fear, &c.*—This verse would read better in the imprecatory form, than as an interrogation. 'Verily, let me fear the great multitude, and let the contempt of families terrify me; let me keep silence, and let me not go out of the door.' So Schultens, and Heath. The punishment which he invokes is the execration of his whole tribe, a life of obscurity, and perpetual imprisonment within his own dwelling.

35, 36. *That mine adversary had written a book. Surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me.*—From the following extracts it appears what is the customary kind of homage, which, in the east, is paid not only to sovereignty, but to communications of the sovereign's will, whether by word, or letter. When the Mogul, by letter, sends his commands to any of his governors, these papers are entertained with as much respect as if himself were present; for the governor having intelligence that such letters are coming near him, he himself, with other inferior officers, ride forth to meet the patamar, or messenger, that brings them; and as soon as he sees those letters, he alights from his horse, falls down on the earth, takes them from the messenger, 'and lays them on his head, whereon he binds them fast:' then, retiring to his place of public meeting, he reads, and answers them.—*Sir Thomas Roe's Embassy*, p. 453.

The letter which was to be presented to the new monarch was delivered to the general of the slaves: it was put up in a purse of cloth drawn together with strings of twisted gold and silk, with tassels of the same, and the chief minister put his own seal upon it; nor was any omitted of all those knick-knacks and curiosities, which the oriental people make use of in making up their epistles.

The general threw himself at his majesty's feet, bowing to the very ground; then rising upon his knees, he drew out of the bosom of his garment the bag, wherein was the letter which

the assembly had sent to the new monarch. Presently he opened the bag, took out the letter, 'kissed it, laid it to his forehead,' presented it to his majesty, and then rose up.—*Sir J. Chardin's* Coron. of Soleimon, p. 44.

To such a custom as is here described, Job seems to allude in this passage.—See *Burder's* Orient. Cust.

The book which Job wishes his adversary had written, might be supposed to contain the accusations of his opponents, and his own vindication of himself.

38—40. *If my land, &c.*—Perhaps these verses should have been introduced after verse 25, or verse 23. They are in the same hypothetical form, and would not there cause any break, or interruption.

CHAP. XXXII. VER. 2. *The Buzite.*—Buz occurs but once, as the name of a place, or country, Jer. xxv. 23, where it is mentioned with Dedan and Tema. Dedan, as we have already shewn, is a city of Idumæa; Tema belonged to the children of Ishmael, who are said to have inhabited from Havilah unto Shur, which is in the district of Egypt, Gen. xxv. 15, 18. Saul, however, is said to have smitten the Amalekites from Havilah even to Shur, which is in the district of Egypt; 1 Sam. xv. 7. Havilah cannot, therefore, be very far from the boundaries of the Amalekites; but the Amalekites never exceeded the boundaries of Arabia Petræa.—See *Reland's* Palæstina, lib. i. c. xiv.

Tema, therefore, lay somewhere to the southward of Judea, between Havilah and the desert of Shur. Tema is also mentioned in connection with Sheba, Job vi. 19.

8. *But there is a spirit in man, &c.*—He had taken notice, in the foregoing verse, of the wisdom to be expected, in a natural way, from age and experience. Here he seems to oppose to that a superior sagacity derived from divine assistance. The ancients ascribed all extraordinary endowments to such an influence. The same sentiment occurs frequently in Homer.—See *Scott*.

13. *Lest ye should say.*—Rather 'Do not say:' the particle *לֹא*, as Heath remarks, is interdictory, or dissuasive.

15, 16. *They were amazed, &c.*—To suppose, with some, that the author here speaks in his own person, would be to make a very inelegant and unusual historical parenthesis in the middle of a dramatic speech. Yet on no better foundation rests the notion, that Elihu was the writer of this poem. It is much more natural to translate these verses in the present tense, as Castellio and Schultens have done.

Ver. 15. They are amazed; still they answer not:

Words are removed from them.

Ver. 16. And I wait; but they speak not:

But they are at a stand; still they answer not.

Here Elihu turns to the audience, desiring them to observe the confusion of the three seniors; who, though he had waited, and was still waiting, for their reply to Job, had nothing to offer. That there were others present at the meeting of the three friends at Job's house, is certain; for Elihu was present. It seems not improbable, that this was an assembly, like those which the literati among the Arabs used to hold, for conferences on points of philosophy, poetry, &c. Hariri, the Cicero of the Arabians, intitled his work, from that custom, 'The Assemblies.'—*Scott*.

19. *My belly.*]—Equivalent to 'my heart.'

CHAP. XXXIII. VER. 14. *Once, yea twice.*]—That is, 'again and again.'

16. *And sealeth their instruction.*]—That is, he gives it a mark and character, by which they may know that it is from above.

22. *To the destroyers.*]—Meaning the destroying angels; or those natural agents, which, in the hand of God, frequently produce death.

23. *A messenger.*]—The word in the original is, מַלְאָךְ, the same that is generally rendered 'an angel.' 'Here,' says Bp. Stock, 'is a remarkable passage, well worthy of the attention of critics, who wish to ascertain the much-disputed point, the date of the poem before us. I conceive it to be clearly an allusion to the fact recorded, 2 Sam. xxiv. 16; 1 Chron. xxi. 15; that of the destroying angel, seen by David in the act of inflicting a plague upon Jerusalem, and commanded to stay his hand, in consequence of the atonement, which the interceding angel ordered king David, by the prophet Gad, to offer unto God upon an altar in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, 1 Chron. xxi. 18. The several circumstances agree together exactly. We have here the 'angel interceding,' (a principal angel too, 'one in a thousand,' most probably the Jehovah-angel of the Jewish people, so often hinted at in Scripture) who commanded Gad to tell David (יִשְׂרָאֵל) what was 'fit to be done' on the occasion; the charge to the destroyer to stay his hand; and lastly, 'the atonement at the threshing-floor,' followed by a complete removal of the pestilence, and by a return of the people to the favor of God, called צִדְקָתוֹ, 'their justification,' ver. 26.

See, also, *Doederlein*, who explains the passage by a reference to the Jewish theology, which, at a later period of their history, admitted the doctrine of two classes of angels, the one accusers, and the others intercessors for human frailty.

23. *An interpreter.*]—Rather, ‘an intercessor; an advocate,’ or ‘a person of persuasive eloquence.’—See *Castell’s* Lexicon Heptaglot.

23. *To shew unto man his uprightness.*]—That is, to point out to man his appropriate duties, leading him, perhaps, by prayer to contrition and repentance; and then God, ver. 24, is gracious unto him, &c.

24. *A ransom.*]—Rather, ‘an atonement;’ for so every thing is called in Scripture, which serves to avert punishment, and to conciliate the divine favor.

26. *He will render unto man his righteousness.*]—That is, he will recompense man for his righteousness.

CHAP. XXXIV. VER. 7. *Who drinketh up scorning like water.*]—‘Scorning’ here means the sin of contemning the decrees of providence; and the comparison indicates the habit of indulging it with the utmost freedom and excess.

13. *Disposed.*]—The verb in Hebrew, סוּ, may convey the idea of creation, and the act of arranging in order.

14. *Upon man.*]—The particle לְ should here have been rendered ‘against,’ as it is, Exod. xiv. 5.

20. *In a moment shall they die.*]—This verse is extremely obscure. In order to explain it, we may observe; 1. That it is a confirmation of God’s impartiality in his punishments by example. 2. That the judgment is capital and instantaneous. 3. That, to increase the terror, it is inflicted at midnight. 4. That it causes a general consternation and dismay. 5. That the mighty perish by it as well as the poor, and that the stroke is given by an invisible and supernatural agent. All these circumstances, says Scott, may possibly suit the destruction of Sennacherib’s army by an angel of the Lord in the night; but the times of Job and his friends, who lived long before that catastrophe, forbid the application. May not the overthrow of some capital city, in the night, by an earthquake, fully answer the description? An earthquake is represented, chap. ix. 5, 6, as an effect and token of the wrath of God; and therefore the power, which is the first agent in producing it, is invisible and divine. The slaughter of all the first born of the Egyptians may, perhaps, be thought by some to be the calamity alluded to. But if the age of Job was posterior to that event, or coincident with it, one might expect a clearer allusion to that and other subsequent miracles, in a poem of this nature: but no such allusions are to be found.

Bp. Stock, in his note on this text, renders the verbs in the present tense.

In a moment they die, and at a midnight
The people quake with fear, and pass away,
And they depart, each strong one, without hand.

The sudden death here described, its happening 'at midnight,' the trepidation of the people, the removal of the 'strong ones' to the other world 'by an invisible hand,' what are all these but the circumstances recorded by Moses, Exodus xii. 29, of the destruction of the first-born of the Egyptians? Pharaoh likewise is the king, to whom God is said, just before, to have given the title 'Belial.' We have here, of course, another proof, that the writer of this poem was posterior in time to Moses.

23. *For he will not lay upon man more than right.*]—Bp. Stock supposes, that the word עֵיךְ, 'more,' is not the true reading here, and would substitute for it עוֹל, 'yoke,' or 'necessity.' If this be allowed, we may then read, 'For he will not lay on man the necessity of entering into judgment with God.' But the meaning of the present text is sufficiently clear; 'He will not lay on man more punishment, or impute more guilt to him, than is just; so that he can have no pretext for questioning the righteousness of God's judgments.'

25. *In the night.*]—When they are supposed to be in a state of rest, security and forgetfulness. They go to sleep, and wake no more; or else they rise to misery and pain.

26. *As wicked men in the open sight of others.*]—This is an allusion to the execution of criminals in public, for the sake of example.

29. *He hideth his face.*]—For God 'to hide his face,' is for him to withdraw his divine favor, or to manifest displeasure. It seems here to be equivalent to the inflicting of some signal vengeance. Scott and Bp. Stock think, that it refers to the custom of covering a malefactor's face before execution; and the expression 'Who then can behold him?' may mean, 'Who then can reverse the sentence?'

30. *That the hypocrite, &c.*]—'That the profligate reign not.' 'Hypocrite' is a very absurd denomination of an openly profane and tyrannical prince, which is the character Elihu is speaking of, ver. 24—28.—Scott.

30. *Lest the people be ensnared.*]—The original is, 'that there be no snares of the people;' that is, that the people may be delivered from the calamities, which they suffer under the government of a tyrant. By destroying such wicked rulers, God

manifests his abhorrence of injustice, and his care of human society.—*Id.*

33. *Should it be according to, &c.*—The Hebrew leads to the following translation:

He hath requited that which is from thee, but thou hast despised it.

But thou must choose, and not I:

Wherefore speak what thou knowest.

The meaning seems to be, ‘God has chastened thee for some fault of thine. I have recommended to thee submission, and mentioned a form of confession. But thou must choose for thyself, whether to submit or not, and not I for thee. Speak therefore what thy conscience dictates.’—*Id.*

‘Hath requited,’ &c. Elihu supposed that affliction is always correction. So far he was under the same mistake with the three friends. But though he believed the sufferings of Job to be a divine chastisement of something wrong in him, he did not join with those censors in concluding from his sufferings, that he was a wicked man.—‘That which is from thee.’ Somewhat found in thee which has offended God.—‘Thou hast despised it.’ It is the same word, by which Eli-phaz expresses contumacy under divine correction, chap. v. 17.—*Id.*

Bp. Hall’s interpretation, or rather paraphrase, of this verse is, ‘Dost thou think it meet that God should proceed in his judgments according to thy conceits? If you and I were to determine what was fit for him to do, he would still take what course he thought best, whether we liked, or disliked it.’

36. *His answers for wicked men.*—‘His speeches, or his arguments, in behalf of wicked men.’

37. *He clappeth his hands.*—We find from this, and a similar expression, chap. xxvii. 23, that the action of clapping the hands, instead of signifying approbation, or applause, means insolence, derision, or contempt. It has a very different signification, 2 Kings xi. 12, where it is said the people clapped their hands and exclaimed, ‘God save the king:’ and so likewise in the Psalms. See Ps. xlvii. 1, and xcvi. 8: but in the time of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Nahum, we find that the action of clapping the hands signifies the same as it does in the book of Job. See Ezek. xxv. 6. Lam. ii. 15, and Nahum, iii. 19. May not this serve, among other considerations, to fix the æra, nearly, in which this book was written? See the Introduction.

CHAP. XXXV. VER. 3. *What profit shall I have, if I be*

cleansed from my sin?—Rather, ‘What profit do I derive from not having sinned?’

5. *Look unto the heavens, &c.*—This is a sublime sentiment in a plain dress. One view, says he, of the magnificent scenery of the lofty sky, will extinguish low conceptions of its almighty author. It will strike the mind with a vast idea of his infinite superiority to all other beings, and of the impossibility of his gaining or suffering by the good, or bad behaviour of his reasonable creatures.—*Scott.*

9. *They make the oppressed cry.*—‘The oppressed cry, by reason of,’ &c.

9. *The arm of the mighty.*—This means ‘the power of the wicked.’

10. *Who giveth songs in the night.*—‘The night’ may signify here, as in chap. xxxiv. 25, a season of calamity. The songs are thanksgivings to God for deliverance from danger; or for joy and comfort, in affliction. Compare Ps. xxxii. 6, 7; xl. 2, 3.

But if ‘the night’ is to be taken literally, there may be a reference to the nocturnal devotions of the pious. See Ps. xlii. 8. lxiii. 5, 6. lxxvii. 6. cxlix. 5. Isa. xxx. 29. Heath, following the Septuagint, reads, ‘Who appointeth guards over me in the night.’ The Syriac has, ‘Who giveth thoughts in the night.’—*Id.*

12. *There they cry, &c.*—‘There they may cry aloud: but there is no deliverance from the pride of evil men.’ *Heath*, after *Le Clerc*.

14. *Yet judgment is before him.*—Rather, ‘the cause is before him.’

15. *Because it is not so.*—The meaning is, ‘Because thou didst not put thy trust in him, he hath visited in his anger; yet he feeleth not that anger in extremity, or in great excess.’

CHAP. XXXVI. VER. 3. *From afar.*—Rather, ‘from the beginning;’ i. e. ‘from first principles,’ agreeably to the Vulgate.

4. *He that is perfect.*—He that is disinterested and sincere. Elihu speaks of himself.

5. *Despiseth not any.*—‘Will not yield to any;’ or ‘rejecteth no one.’ In other words, ‘He is no respecter of persons.’

6. *He preserveth not the life of the wicked.*—That is, ‘because he may happen to be rich and powerful,’ understood. ‘Life’ here means, or comprehends, every thing that renders life desirable. See note on Prov. xv. 10.

9. *That they have exceeded.*—‘How they have set him at defiance.’—*Heath.*

The ancient versions annex to the original יתגבר, in this text, an idea of the abuse of power. See the Lexicons on גבר.

12. *By the sword.*]—This expression sometimes means ‘by a signal judgment from God.’ The sword of the destroying angel is, perhaps, here alluded to. See ch. xxxiii. 18.

13. *When he bindeth them.*]—‘To bind’ here signifies, by a very natural metaphor, to deprive them of the power of gratifying their sinful passions, by diseases, by premature old age, and other visitations of God’s providence. The usual means of bodily coercion are figuratively applied to the mind.

14. *Their life is among the unclean.*]—The Septuagint reads, ‘Their life is wounded by angels;’ i. e. by natural causes, established by God, to punish the wicked in this life. The Chaldee has, ‘Their lives are devoted to prostitution.’ The Vulgate agrees with our present translation, which sufficiently expresses the sense. See the Marginal Reading.

15. *And openeth their ears, &c.*]—That is, ‘Caused them, when under oppression, to hear the voice of wisdom.’

16. *Even so, &c.*]—‘The strait place’ meaneth his present afflicted condition; ‘the broad place’ his deliverance. The phrase ‘where there is no straitness’ expresses the completeness of the deliverance. And ‘the table full of fatness,’ or ‘furnished with fatted things,’ signifies the affluence and enjoyment, in which he should spend the remainder of his life. The parallel passages are, Ps. cxviii. 5. xxiii. 5.—*Scott.*

17. *But thou hast fulfilled the judgment of the wicked.*]—Rather, ‘But if thou hast,’ &c. i. e. if, on suffering the wholesome chastisements of God, thou hast exhibited all the obstinacy and perverseness of the wicked, then judgment and justice take hold on thee.

18. *Because there is wrath, &c.*]—‘Because God’s wrath is justly excited on such occasions, beware,’ &c.

18. *A great ransom.*]—Rather, ‘a great atonement.’

20. *When people are cut off in their place.*]—The Hebrew is, ‘For the ascent of people to their places.’ Their sepulchres, says Bp. Stock, &c. Night, in this verse, means the night of death; the darkness of the grave. Compare John xi. 4.

21. *Take heed, regard not iniquity.*]—Rather, ‘Take heed, lest thou return to thine iniquity.’ That is, lest thou return to the foolish and impious habit of arraigning the righteous judgments of God.

21. *Rather than affliction.*]—Rather than learn the humble duty of suffering affliction with patience and resignation.

22. *Scott would translate this verse, ‘Behold, God is exalted in his power; who is a lawgiver like unto him?’*

27. *For he maketh small, &c.*]—Evaporation is the gradual solution of water in air, produced and promoted by attraction, heat, and motion, by which other solutions are effected. The attractive power of the air draws up the watery particles that are in contact with it. By attracting them, the air at the same time fineth them; separating and leaving behind their saline and other heterogeneous parts. By this divine chemistry, they become qualified for the purposes of a rainy cloud. When the air has drawn up the watery vapors, it dissolves them; that is, unites them with itself. It keeps them suspended, in this state of solution, until by cold, or some other cause, it is forced to let some of them go. They then run together by their own mutual attraction, and form a cloud. They continue in that form until the cloud is so accumulated, by a fresh accession of more watery vapors, as to become heavier than the air; or until by heat or density the air itself is so diminished, as to become lighter than the cloud. The cloud then falls in drops of rain.

But still attraction, which is supposed to be the first mechanical agent in this wonderful process, is itself little understood. For who can define the precise bulk and shape of those minute particles of air, which are endowed with an attractive power? and as for heat and cold, so instrumental in producing rain, who knows what are the first natural causes of them? Rain, therefore, which is the origin of fountains and rivers, and one principal means of carrying on vegetation and supporting animal life, must still be reckoned among the great and incomprehensible works of God.—See *Scott*.

29. *The noise of his tabernacle.*]—An allusion to the phenomenon of thunder, which in Arabia is most tremendous.

30. *Covereth.*]—‘Concealeth.’

31. *By them.*]—The pronoun ‘them,’ must refer to the clouds that drop rain, ver. 27, 28. These may be said to judge the people, when they withhold refreshment from the fruits of the earth; and when they destroy them by floods and storms.

33. *The cattle also concerning the vapour.*]—The very cattle perceive the cloud as soon as it rises, and declare what God intends to do with it; whether to turn it into storms and tempests, or into fruitful rain and showers.—*Bp. Patrick*.

Bp. Stock, deriving מִקֵּנָה from נִקַּן, ‘to be warm with zeal,’ renders this verse; ‘Concerning him his thunder telleth, even the fervor of his wrath against oppression.’

CHAP. XXXVII. VER. 4. *He will not stay them, &c.*]—Rather, as the Vulgate reads, ‘He will not be traced, or sought out, when the voice of his thunder is heard.’ No one can in all cases tell what judgments are inflicted; or for what hidden

crimes some sinners are punished, and others permitted to live.

6. *The great rain of his strength.*]—This is an allusion, we may suppose, to the copious, autumnal rains, which fall in those countries. Or, perhaps, it may refer to the drenching showers, that frequently succeed a thunder-storm.

7. *He sealeth up the hand of every man.*]—By such tremendous storms, he preventeth every man from pursuing his labors in the field. The hand that is sealed, or closed, cannot work. Hence the propriety of this metaphor.

9. *Out of the south cometh the whirlwind.*]—M. Savary, speaking of the southern wind, which blows in Egypt from February to May, says, it fills the atmosphere with a subtil dust, which impedes respiration, and brings with it pernicious vapors. Sometimes it appears only in the shape of an impetuous whirlwind, which passes rapidly, and is fatal to the traveller surprised in the middle of the deserts. Torrents of burning sand roll before it, the firmament is enveloped in a thick veil, and the sun appears of the color of blood. Sometimes whole caravans are buried in it. Does not Job allude to this wind, when he says, ‘Out of the south cometh the whirlwind?’ But Bp. Stock renders the verse, ‘Out of his chamber cometh the storm, and from the blighting winds the cold;’ and derives מורים from מור ‘to taint,’ or ‘blight.’

10. *The breath of God.*]—The stormy, cold, freezing winds, mentioned in the preceding verse. A tempestuous wind is, in the lofty style of eastern poetry, called ‘the breath of God,’ chap. iv. 9.

10. *Is straitened.*]—This version cannot be right. Water is not straitened by freezing, but dilated. It takes up more room when frozen, than in its state of fluidity; as hath been proved by many experiments. The translation, perhaps, should be,

‘And the broad waters became hard.’

במוצק, in a state of hardness, or cohesion, chap. xxxviii. 38, ‘when the dust groweth into hardness,’ למוצק. It is a metaphor derived from fused metals, which when cooled cohere in a more solid mass. But our translators had the image of an immense river, perhaps, whose bed was contracted by its being partly frozen. Every one knows that the water near the sides of ponds and rivers freezes first. Snow, cold, frost, and ice, were not uncommon in Judea, which bordered on Arabia Petræa. See chap. vi. 16.

10. *The waters.*]—The ponds, lakes, and winter rivers, or tor-

rents. It may be thought incredible, that there should ever be such severe cold in those warm climates as to freeze lakes and rivers. But the Rev. Mr. Dawes informs us, that in 1756-7, at Aleppo (lat. 32°. 0' north) they had a very sharp winter, which destroyed all the fruits of the earth. The cold was so very intense, that the mercury in Fahrenheit's thermometer, exposed a few minutes to the open air, sunk entirely into the ball of the tube. Millions of olive-trees, that had withstood the severity of fifty winters, were blasted; and thousands of souls perished merely through cold.

Was not this a frost sufficient to freeze a lake, or river? And yet Aleppo is so warm a climate, that the same author tells us, they were obliged to sleep on the terrace of their houses in summer.—See *Scott*.

11. 'Also, by dripping, the cloud weareth away.'—*Bp. Stock*.

But *ברר*, which we render 'by watering,' means a clear, serene sky. See Taylor's Heb. Concordance on *ברר*, No. 20, and Arias Montanus. The meaning, therefore, may be, that sun-shine dissipates the cloud, or causes its vapor to reflect light.

12. *And it is turned round about, &c.*—Rather, this vicissitude of sun-shine and clouded weather is produced by his counsels.

13. *He causeth it to come.*—That is, he causeth it to happen, or take place.

15. *Disposed them.*—Formed these arrangements in the œconomy of nature.

15. *Caused the light of his cloud to shine?*—Perhaps this refers to the 'rainbow.' Others understand it of 'lightning.'

16. *Dost thou know the balancings of the clouds?*—Dost thou know how the clouds infinitely varying in density, magnitude, and form, are suspended, and kept floating at different heights in the atmosphere.

18. *As a molten looking-glass.*—The world has been so often told that the mirrors of the Israelitish women were of metal, on occasion of what is said Exod. xxxviii. 8, that few people of reading are unapprised of it; but it is known also that they are generally convex and made of steel. If the same material, and the same form, were used in the country of Elihu, the image made use of in this text must be more lively than if we suppose them made of brass, and flat. A serene sky is much more of the color of steel than of brass; and a piece of this metal formed into a concavo-convex shape, must much more strongly

have affected the imagination of an Arab, thinking of the visible appearance of the atmosphere, than a plane piece of metal. —*Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 339.

19. *Teach us what we shall say.*]—The author here gives us an evident proof of his great skill in the management of the drama, as he, by degrees, prepares us for the appearance of the Almighty. His awful harbingers, the thunder and lightning, at a distance had announced his coming. Elihu then ‘trembled, and his heart was ready to leap out of his breast,’ ver. 1. But, at his nearer approach, he is in the utmost hurry and confusion: he is afraid to open his mouth; he is lost in amazement. The glory of God is too dazzling for mortal eyes to bear. The 20th and 21st verses may be rendered, ‘Could what I say be reported to him? Can a man speak when he is swallowed up in amazement?’ ver. 21. ‘Even now men cannot behold the bright light, when the wind passeth over and scoureth them clean;’ ver. 22. ‘and fair weather cometh from the north.’—As to God, terrible is the majesty of the Almighty: we cannot, &c. The argument in the 21st verse is to this effect, ‘Man cannot bear to look at the sun when he shineth in his lustre; how much less on that tremendous blaze of glory, which surrounds the throne of the Almighty!’—See *Schultens* and *Heath*.

22. *Fair weather cometh out of the north.*]—The Hebrew word for ‘fair weather’ is rendered by the Septuagint Νέφη χρυσαυγέα, ‘gold-colored clouds.’ An old Greek tragedian, quoted by Grotius, speaks of Χρυσωπρος Αἰθήρ, ‘the gilded ether.’ Varro uses the phrase, aurescit aer, ‘the air is gilded.’ The poets abound with passages comparing the solar orb, or light, to gold. Thus Virgil, *Georg.* i. 232, calls the sun ‘aureus,’ or golden: and Milton, *Par. Lost*, b. iii. 572, mentions,

‘The golden sun, in splendor likest heav’n.’

Thomson also, in his description of a summer’s morning, introduces

———‘The mountain’s brow
Illum’d with fluid gold.’—*Summer*, line 83.

24. *Wise of heart.*]—Rather, ‘Wise in their own conceit.’

CHAP. XXXVIII. VER. 1. *The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind.*]—A general silence ensued, when the Almighty himself appeared, as judge, to decide this great controversy, and out of a whirlwind directed his speech to Job. The subject of it is God’s omnipotence, as displayed in the works of the creation. Many philosophers, poets, and divines, have adorned this noble argument; but the Holy Scriptures far sur-

pass all human compositions in those sublime descriptions, which they give of the majesty of God, and the wisdom and magnificence of his works.—*Peters.*

‘Out of the stormy cloud,’ סערה, the Septuagint δια λαίλαπος και νεφων, (M.S. Alex. νεφες) ‘in a storm and clouds.’ It signifies ‘a storm at sea,’ which is always attended with dark clouds, Jonah i. 4. That the Almighty manifested himself on this occasion by some visible token of his presence, may be inferred, from what Job says, chap. xlii. 5. ‘But now mine eye seeth thee:’ and ‘a cloud’ was generally his mode of appearance. Compare Ezek. i. 4; Nahum i. 3.—*Scott.*

2. Who is this that darkeneth wisdom by words,
This man without knowledge?—*Bp. Stock.*

7. *When the morning-stars sang together.*]—It is observable, from many passages in the prophets, that the angels are compared to, or spoken of, under the metaphor of ‘stars.’ See particularly Isai. xiv. 12. The beauty and propriety of these allusions of the prophets will appear with greater lustre, when it is considered that the hosts of heaven were the objects of heathen idolatry; both the visible and invisible host, as well the angels as the lights of heaven; for the superstition seems to have been originally the same, since the worship of the heavenly bodies terminated in the worship of those angels, or intellectual beings, who are believed to animate or conduct them; and hence we see a reason why the angels are called ‘stars,’ and ‘morning-stars,’ in Scripture.—*Peters.* See, also, *Rosenmüller.*

8. *Out of the womb.*]—‘The womb,’ out of which the waters of the sea issued, seems to have been the subterraneous abyss, the ‘sea under ground,’ as the Arabs call it. Thus Drusius explains it, ‘The abyss was as it were the womb thereof.’—*Id.*

13. *Take hold of the ends of the earth.*]—The diffusion of the morning-light over the whole face of the earth, is expressed by the beautiful figure of its ‘taking hold of the ends of the earth.’ In the second sentence, the moral benefit of the morning to mankind is taken notice of; ‘That the wicked might be shaken out of it;’ i. e. ‘banished, or put to death.’ Or it may mean that the light of the morning drives them to their caves and lurking-places. It should be observed, that, in those times and countries, the courts of justice sat in the morning, Judg. vi. 31. Ps. ci. 8, ‘I will early’ (in the morning) ‘destroy all the wicked of the land.’ Also, Jer. xxi. 12. This singular circumstance gives a dignity and importance to the description of the morning, worthy to come from the mouth of the righteous Governor of the world.—See *Peters*, and *Lud. Cappelli Not. Crit.*

14. *It is turned as clay to the seal.*—‘The birds pillage the granary of Joseph extremely, where the corn of Egypt is deposited; that is, paid as a tax to the grand signior: for it is quite uncovered at the top, there being little or no rain in that country; its doors, however, are kept carefully sealed, but its inspectors do not make use of wax on this occasion, but put their seal upon a handful of clay, with which they cover the lock of the door. This, doubtless, is what is referred to in these words, ‘It is turned as clay to the seal.’—*Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 385.

During the darkness of the night, the earth is a perfect blank; in which state it resembles clay that has no impression. But the morning-light falling upon the earth, innumerable objects make their appearance on it: it is then changed, like clay, which has received the stamp of the seal.

Houbigant seems very properly to have placed the 15th verse after the 13th; justly observing, that the wicked spoken of in each verse, properly connect each with the other; whereas in the 14th the earth is spoken of, which God impresses with various forms like soft clay. He renders each in the potential mood, ver. 15. ‘That the wicked might be deprived of its light, that the arms of the deceitful might be broken.’ Ver. 14. That the earth, like soft clay, may ‘put on various forms, that it may be changed as a garment.’—*Dr. Dodd*.

15. *The high arm.*—The arm that is raised to inflict cruel and unjust punishment; or to commit some act of robbery and violence.

20. *That thou shouldest, &c.*—Seeing thou canst conduct us to its border, and seeing thou art acquainted with the paths to its house?

23. *Which I have reserved, &c.*—The inspired poet still keeps in view the moral purposes for which the Deity employs his natural works. ‘The time of trouble’ may signify not winter in general, but those severe winters, in which there falls such abundance of snow and hail as does infinite damage to the fruits of the earth, to cattle, and to human kind.

Leo Africanus assures us, that the caravans which travel through the African deserts are sometimes suddenly overtaken with such furious storms of snow, that their beasts, and carriages, and themselves, are buried in it.

23. *The day of battie and war.*—These expressions may only import that in such ‘a time of trouble’ as was mentioned in the former sentence, God himself makes war upon his enemies; that is, punishes the sins of men by using snow and hail to destroy their sustenance. Extraordinary and miraculous snow, or

hail, may also be intended, like that with which he punished the Egyptians and the Canaanites. There might be instances of the same kind before those times, which might fall within the compass of Job's experience, or information.—*Scott*.

24. *By what way is the light parted, &c.*—One may suppose from this, that the author alluded to the separation of the rays of light, and the formation of the prismatic colors in the rainbow.

The ancient versions greatly vary. The Septuagint reads, 'Whence cometh the hoar frost?' or 'whence is the south wind issued over the earth?' This differs from all the other ancient versions. The Vulgate has, 'By what means is light spread abroad, and heat dispersed over the surface of the earth?' Our translation would be more intelligible, if the verse were broken into two distinct questions, placing a note of interrogation after 'parted,' and reading, 'Who,' or 'what cause scattereth,' &c.

26, 27. *To cause it to rain, &c.*—This circumstance, where 'no man is,' &c. is dwelt upon, to shew the provision which the Creator makes for the sustenance of 'wild beasts.' Compare Ps. civ. 10, 11, 12; Joel ii. 22. This instance of the power and providence of God might also be intended to suggest, that he who turns the barren wilderness into a fruitful field, is equally able to change a miserable condition into a happy one. Such instruction is a strong motive to confidence in God, even in the most desperate situation, as Job thought his own to be. Compare chap. v. 9—11.—*Scott*.

28. *Hath the rain a father?*—The question cannot be whether the rain hath a father, but 'who is the father of the rain?' as appears by the next sentence; or 'who hath begotten the drops of the dew?'—*Id*.

30. *The waters are hid as with a stone.*—'How do the waters harden like a stone, and the face of the water, how is it congealed?'—*Houbigant*.

31, 32. *Canst thou bind, &c.*—He is now asked, whether he has power over the heavenly bodies, to direct their motions, control their action upon the earth, and prevent the seasons and weather which they are wont to produce.

The guesses of the learned concerning those astronomical terms, which we translate Pleiades, Orion, and Arcturus, were mentioned in the note on chap. ix. 9. Chrysostom explains Mazzaroth of 'the twelve signs' of the zodiac. Our marginal version adopts that explanation. The Hebrew is מִזְרֹת. Some will have the root to be אָזַר, to gird. מִזְרֹר is a girdle. Hence (says Castell) אֲזֹר הַמִּזְרֹת, 'the girdle,' or belt, of 'the constellations;' i.e. the zodiac. See other derivations in Clodius's Lexi-

con Selectum, p. 335. 'Bringing forth' the twelve signs each in its season, or month, is an expression accommodated to the then received system of the world. The earth was supposed to be at rest in the centre; and the heavens to revolve annually round it, carrying with them the sun, planets, and fixed stars.—*Scott*.

The Indian division of the zodiac into the twelve usual signs, says Sir W. Jones, (Works, vol. iv. p. 71), has been known in the East from time immemorial. It was known, also, by the most ancient Chaldees and Phœnicians.—*Hyde*, p. 396. See, also, *Rosenmüller*, and the authors referred to by him.

31. *The sweet influences, &c.*—'The sweet influences' are the pleasant season of spring; 'the bands' are the rigors of winter, when the earth is bound with frost. The chief attention of the Arabs was not so much to the planets, as to the fixed stars, their rising and setting, and their supposed influence in producing rain, wind, heat, cold, and other changes of weather. See Pococke's Specim. Hist. Arab. 164, where we are told, that one of the three branches of knowledge, which the ancient Arabs chiefly applied themselves to, was the influence of the stars in producing rainy weather.

32. Bp. Stock translates,

'Canst thou bring forth the blight in its season,
And comfort corrosion over her sons?'

And adds the following note:

A beautiful, poetical image. Canst thou make amends for the destructive blast; for the loss of the numerous tribes of insects, to which she gave birth last season, and which were swept away as quickly as they came, by giving her the opportunity of producing as many more?

37. 'Who shall number the warring clouds by wisdom?
And the pitchers of heaven who shall stop?'

That is, 'Who shall prevent them from discharging their contents upon the earth?' This image is similar to the inclined urn, which the heathen poets place in the hand of a river-god.—*Scott*, from *Schultens*.

CHAP. XXXIX. VER. 1. *Knowest thou—canst thou mark, &c.*—Not mere knowledge, but providential care and protection, is intended here. Chap. x. 12, 'Thy visitation hath preserved (שמרה) my spirit.' Grotius expounds חלל אילות תשמור, an obstetricari potes cervis foemineis? 'To know' is used in this sense, Ps. xxxi. 7. The other expression, 'canst thou mark,' &c.

should have been, 'canst thou watch over,' or 'preserve, the calving of the hinds?' i. e. the hinds when they calve.—*Scott*.

1. *The wild goats of the rock.*]—The kind of wild goat here mentioned is the 'ibex,' or the 'eveck.' Its habitation is on the tops of the highest rocks, where its perpetual leaping from precipice to precipice, together with the kids, exposes them to so many perils, that without a singular care of Providence the breed must perish. It is remarkable for its swiftness and agility; for the largeness of its horns, which bend backward and extend to the buttocks; and for its affection to its parents and young. 1 Sam. xxiv. 2; Ps. civ. 18. *Bochart*, Hieroz. p. i. 917—920.

1. *The hinds.*]—The hind, or roe, is the female of the hart. It is a lovely creature, of an elegant shape, and its hair is of great price. It is noted for its swiftness, and the sureness of its step. The rutting-time is at the beginning of autumn. They go eight months, and bring forth in the spring. This creature is timorous, perpetually fleeing from wild beasts, or men, and jumping among the rocks, 2 Sam. xxii. 34; Ps. xviii. 33; Cant. ii. 8, 9. viii. 14; Habak. iii. 19. *Bochart*, Hieroz. p. 1. lib. iii. cap. 17.—See *Scott*.

2. *Canst thou number—knowest thou, &c.*]—'Canst thou number' is here equivalent to, 'Canst thou appoint the number of,' &c. See chap. xiv. 5. And 'knowing' means operative, providential care, as in ver. 1.

3. *They bow themselves, &c.*]—The difficulty with which these creatures bring forth their young, is noticed by Pliny, Nat. Hist. lib. viii. 32. That difficulty is here painted by our poet in very expressive terms:

'They bow themselves, they burst with their pangs, they cast out their young ones.'—See *Grotius*.

9. *The unicorn.*]—'The oryx, or wild bull.' The Hebrew name is רֵאֵם, 'Reem,' which appears from the allusion to it in Scripture to be a creature of great strength, with high and terrible horns, and of the beeve kind. It cannot, therefore, be the unicorn, which is a fish in the north seas. The land unicorn is a mere fiction. Neither can it be the rhinoceros, which has but one horn, and that a very short one, placed just over the nose. Neither is it the Arabian reem, which is a species of roe, and a weak, timid animal. It is most probably the wild bull, bred in the Syrian and Arabian deserts; which answers perfectly well to the characters of the Scripture reem. The Arabian poets are very copious in their descriptions of the hunting of this animal, and borrow many images from its

beauty, swiftness, strength, and the loftiness of its horns. They represent it as a very fierce and untameable beast, white on the back, with large shining eyes. The reader, however, ought to be informed, that one of the Arabian poets joins it with the roes; perhaps because they are both wild creatures. Damir, their great naturalist, in the chapter which he entitles, 'Of the wild bull,' describes no other than a wild stag. But so Cæsar, speaking of the Urus, a native of the black forest in Germany, calls it 'bos cervi figura,' a beeve shaped like a stag. The reems are in effect called 'wild bulls' by the Psalmist, Ps. xxii. For those whom he styles 'bulls of Bashan;' i. e. of the mountains of Bashan, ver. 12, he calls 'reems,' ver. 21, as though they were synonymous terms. In short, the reem must be supposed to be of the beeve kind; since it is represented in our author's description as qualified by its make and strength for the business of agriculture, like the tame ox.—*Scott; Rosenmüller.*

13. *Gavest thou the goodly wings unto the peacocks, or wings and feathers unto the ostrich?*—This verse may be better rendered from the original, 'The wing of the ostrich is quivering, or expanded; the very feathers and plumage of the stork.'

Dr. Shaw, in his travels, observes, that when the ostrich is full-grown, the neck, particularly of the male, which before was almost naked, is then very beautifully covered with red feathers. The plumage likewise upon the back, the shoulders, and some parts of the wings, from being before of a dark greyish color, becomes then as black as jet; whilst the rest of the feathers exhibit an exquisite whiteness: they retain 'the very feathers and plumage of the stork.' When they are disturbed, they fly with a swiftness that no creature can equal. Nothing certainly can be a more beautiful sight; the wings by their repeated, though unwearied vibrations, equally serving them for sails and oars; and hence we see with what propriety the sacred writer ascribes to them an 'expanded, quivering wing.'

According to Scott, the translation should be, 'Is it the pinion and feathers of the stork?' See, also, *Castellio*, and *Noldius*. The ostrich prideth herself on her quivering, expanded wing, but without reason; since it does not, like the wing of the stork, provide for the security and education of her young. Natural affection is as remarkable in the stork, as the want of it is represented to be (ver. 16) in the ostrich.

14—17. *Which leaveth her eggs in the earth, &c.*—The ostrich lays from thirty to fifty eggs; the first of which she deposits in the centre, and the rest as conveniently as possible round it. In this manner she is said 'to lay,' deposit, or trust, 'her eggs in the earth, and to warm them' (by incubation) 'in

the dust; and forgetteth that the foot' of the traveller 'may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them.' It is also observed, that the ostrich has a very small share of that natural affection, which so strongly exerts itself in other creatures. For, upon the least distinct noise, or trivial occasion, she forsakes her eggs, or young ones; to which, perhaps, she never returns; or, if she does, it may be too late either to restore genial warmth to the one, or preserve the lives of the other. Accordingly, the Arabs sometimes meet with whole nests of these eggs undisturbed; and often with a few of the young ones, about the size of a pullet, half-starved, straggling and moaning about, like distressed orphans in search of their mother. Hence the ostrich may be justly said 'to be hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers; her labor,' in hatching and attending them so far, 'being in vain, without fear,' or the least concern of what becomes of them afterwards. This want of affection is also mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah: 'The daughter of my people is become cruel, like the ostriches in the wilderness,' Lam. iv. 3. Nor is this the only reproach which belongs to the ostrich. She is also inconsiderate and foolish in the choice of her food, which is frequently detrimental, and sometimes highly pernicious; swallowing every thing indiscriminately, with the greatest greediness, whether pieces of rag, leather, wood, stone, lead, or iron. It may, therefore, be justly said, that God 'hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.' —*Dr. Shaw.*

19—25. *Hast thou given the horse strength? &c.*]—This description of the horse is the most celebrated of any in the poem; and contains all the noble images that thought can form of this generous beast, expressed with such force and beauty, as would have given the great writers of antiquity new laws for the sublime, had they been acquainted with this book. It is remarkable, that the classical poets chiefly endeavour to paint the outward figure, lineaments, and motions, of the horse; but the sacred poet, by making all the particulars flow from the inward beauties that he describes, animates his description with great spirit and vivacity. Several of the expressions are singularly elegant. 'Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder?' by which bold figure he not only expresses that remarkable beauty in a horse, the shaking of his mane, and the flakes of his hair, which naturally suggest the idea of lightning, but also the violent agitation and force of his neck, which, in the oriental language, would have been flatly expressed by a metaphor less bold than this.

Th' impatient courser pants in every vein,
And pawing, seems to beat the distant plain:
Hills, vales, and floods, appear already cross'd,
And ere he starts a thousand steps are lost.

Pope. See *Guardian*, No. 86.

19. *Hast thou clothed his neck, &c.*]—I understand this of the neighing of the war-horse, which, though shrill, is compared to thunder for its loudness and terror.

The neck is here put for the throat, through which the voice passes, as in Virgil, (quoted by Bochart) when he is describing the swans:

Dum sese a pastu referunt, et longa canoros
Dant per colla modos.

Thunder means the terrible modification of the voice of the war-horse when he neighs.

His throat is said 'to be clothed with thunder,' which may seem a harsh expression; but the Hebrews denoted any permanent quality, or circumstance, by the metaphor of clothing. Thus, it is said in Ezek. xxvi. 16, 'they shall clothe themselves with trembling;' that is, 'they shall tremble every moment.'—*Scott.*

20. *Canst thou make him afraid, &c.*]—'Canst thou make him leap as the locust?' This agility expresses his joy to find himself in the rank of battle. *Ælian* says of the war-horse, 'When he hears the sounding of the reins, and the clattering of the bits, and sees the breastplates and forehead-pieces, he neighs, and leaping makes the ground ring with his hoofs.'

The simile of the locust is illustrated by *Dr. Shaw*. This insect, he says, has its two hinder legs, or feet, much stronger, larger, and longer, than any of the foremost: in them the knee, or articulation with the leg and thigh, is distinguished by a remarkable bending, or curvature, by which it is enabled, whenever prepared to jump, to spring and raise itself with great force and activity.

20. *The glory of his nostrils, &c.*]—'The strength of his snorting is terrible.'—*Mr. Heath.*

Or, the snorting of a horse may be considered as expressive of conscious strength, of pride and disdain.

This action of the horse denotes joy heightened to a pitch of fury.

Et fremitum patulis sub naribus edit ad arma.—*Lucret.*

—'When by fierce alarms

He snorts, and bears his rider on to arms.'—*Creech.*

21. *He paweth in the valley.*]—The valley, or plain, is mentioned, because cavalry cannot act in a hilly country. His pawing expresses impatience for the signal of battle.

21. *Rejoiceth in his strength.*]—Conscious of his powers, and filled with the prospect of victory and glory.

21. *He goeth on to meet, &c.*]—‘He would go out to meet the armed men.’ He can hardly keep his rank, so eager is he to charge the enemy.

22, 23. *Neither turneth he back, &c.*]—‘The sword from which he turneth not back,’ must surely be the sword lifted up to strike him; the sword, therefore, of the enemy, and ‘the quiver which rattleth against him,’ must mean the quiver and arrows which rattle against him, or are shot at him, when the battle is begun. His courage and daring spirit, which urge him on amidst these horrors, is plainly the finishing-stroke in the description. Accordingly, Dr. Young has, in his translation, closed the description with these two verses.

23. *The shield.*]—‘The javelin,’ which is a short spear. It undoubtedly means some such offensive weapon, in Josh. viii. 18, 26, where it is translated ‘a spear.’

24. *He swalloweth the ground, &c.*]—This verse should have been joined to ver. 21. There the horse was represented in the utmost eagerness ‘to go out and meet the armed men.’ Here his impatience grows stronger; his imagination devours the space between him and the hostile army, and he fancies himself in the midst of the engagement.

Stare adeo miserum est, pereunt vestigia mille
Ante fugam, absentemque ferit gravis ungula campum.
Thebaid. vi.

‘Delay such misery is, that ere he starts
A thousand steps are vanished, and his hoof
Smites the far-distant plain.’

24. *Neither believeth he, &c.*]—This sentence and the subsequent verse mark the passions of this noble animal, when the trumpet sounds a charge. He doubts, he hopes, he is transported; and at last is fixed in his conviction and joy, by hearing the thunder of the captains, and the shouts of the soldiers coming on to battle. Then, ‘mocking at fear,’ he bears his rider with impetuosity on the foe: neither ‘turneth he back from the lifted sword,’ &c. ver. 22, 23.

When some great good fortune befalls us, in our transport we scarcely believe it. It is too good, we say, to be true. Thus Job xxix. 24, ‘If I smiled on them, they believed not.’ This

animated figure applied to the horse, represents with energy and beauty his excess of joy.—*Scott.*

25. *Ha, ha!*]—The Hebrew word for this exclamation is הנה, which was intended to express the snorting of the horse on this, and similar occasions, when the animal is animated and roused.

26. *Doth the hawk, &c.*]—Most of the species of hawks, we are told, are birds of passage. The hawk, therefore, is produced here as a specimen of that astonishing instinct, which teaches birds of passage to know their times and seasons; when to migrate out of one country into another, for the benefit of food, or a warmer climate, or for both. The stork, also, is of this kind. See Jer. viii. 7.

CHAP. XL. VER. 10. *Deck thyself now with majesty, &c.*]—Job is here ironically required to invest himself with the attributes of God.

13. *Bind their faces in secret.*]—That is, consign them to the sepulchre with the grave-cloths wrapped about their faces. Such was the face of Lazarus when raised from the dead.—*Parkhurst.*

15. *Behold now behemoth.*]—The Hebrew word expresses an animal, which eminently partakes of the bestial, or brutish nature. Bochart seems to have proved, that the behemoth is the hippopotamos, or river-horse. Two descriptions, one from the ancients, and the other from a modern, who saw this creature, may serve instead of a commentary on the passage. The ancient is Achilles Tatius, who thus describes the animal:

‘Some persons chanced to meet with, and take, a river-monster which was very remarkable. The Egyptians call it the river-horse, or horse of the river Nile, and it resembles a horse, indeed, in its feet and body, excepting that its hoofs are cloven. Its tail is short, and without hairs, as well as the rest of the body. Its head is round, but not small; its jaws, or cheeks, resemble those of a horse; its nostrils are very large, and breathe out a vapor like smoke; its mouth is wide, and extends to the temples; its teeth, especially those called the canine, are curved like those of a horse, both in their form and situation, but thrice as large. It is a very voracious animal, and would consume the produce of a whole field. It is very strongly made all over; and its skin is so hard, that it is impenetrable to any weapon.’ The modern traveller is the sieur Thevenot, who saw one of these animals at Cairo. ‘This animal, says he, was of a tan-color; its hinder parts resemble those of an ox, or buffalo, excepting that its feet are shorter and thicker; in size it is equal to a camel; its snout, or nose, is like that of an ox,

and its body twice as big; its head resembles that of a horse, and is of the same size; its eyes are small; its crest is very thick; its ears are small; its nostrils are wide and open; its feet are very thick, pretty large, and have each four toes, like those of a crocodile; its tail is small, without any hair, like that of an elephant; its lower jaw has four large teeth, about half a foot long, two of them crooked, and as thick as the horns of an ox, one of which is on each side of the throat; beside these, it has two others, which are straight, of the same thickness as those which are crooked, and project forwards.' The river-horse shelters himself among the reeds; and the behemoth is said to be 'in the covert of the reed, and fens,' and to be 'compassed about with the willows of the brook.' The river-horse feeds upon the herbage of the Nile; and the behemoth is said to 'eat grass as an ox.' No creature is known to have stronger ribs than the river-horse; and the bones of the behemoth are 'as strong pieces of brass, like bars of iron.' See Bp. Lowth's notes on his 6th Prælect. 8vo. edit.—*Dr. Dodd.*

16. *In the navel of his belly.*]—Rather, 'in the muscles of his belly.' Grotius understanding this as said of the elephant, remarks that the Hebrew word בֶּטֶן may in this place be better interpreted, 'his pain, or weakness.' Pliny and other naturalists inform us, that the belly of the elephant is soft, and is very easily wounded; not to mention that this animal is said to be peculiarly subject to diseases in that part.

17. *He moveth his tail like a cedar.*]—'He erecteth his tail like a cedar.'—*Heath.*

'Tail' is here used, perhaps, in the same sense as 'cauda' in Horace, Sat. I. ii. 45. Instead of 'tail,' Grotius understands the Hebrew word, זָנָב, to mean 'his proboscis.'

19. *He is the chief of the ways of God.*]—'He is one of the most distinguished of the works of God.'

20. *Surely the mountains, &c.*]—Three characters of the behemoth are marked here. 1. He frequents the mountains. This is so true of the elephant, that one sort are called mountaineers. 2. The mountains supply him with food. The elephant lives there upon grass, plants, and the tender branches of trees, which he breaks off with his trunk. 3. He is a gentle and sociable animal. The elephant will graze freely with other animals, whether wild or tame. Among the latter, if they are near enough to be hurt by his sudden motion, he puts them gently by with his proboscis. None of these characters suit the river-horse, who is a solitary creature, never goes far from the river, and leaves it only in the night; who has no mountains on the banks of the Nile, frequented by wild beasts, to resort to, were

he inclined to visit such eminences; and who is of a savage nature and carnivorous.—*Scott*.

The truth is, that the characteristics here given to behemoth will not strictly apply to the elephant, the crocodile, the hippopotamos, or any one animal with which we are acquainted. See *Bochart*, and *Rosenmüller's* elaborate Scholium on ver. 15.

23. *Behold, he drinketh up a river, &c.*—The Septuagint renders, 'If there chance an inundation.' Instead of 'he can draw up,' we may read, 'He can spout out.' Jordan is put here by a figure for any river; and the Hebrew particle rendered *into*, signifies *through*, as in Numb. xxv. 8. The whole verse may be rendered, 'Should an inundation of the river suddenly overtake him, he would not be in the least fear; he trusteth that he can spout forth Jordan through his mouth.'—*Heath*.

24. *He taketh, &c.*—*Scott* would render this verse, 'Let a man take him openly, let him draw a cord through his nose.' So, also, *Houbigant* and *Heath* nearly. See our marginal reading. Job is here called on, in most humiliating irony, to try his courage on this huge and powerful creature, to take him by open force, and guide him when taken, with a cord, as he used to manage his camels. The second sentence alludes, perhaps, to the hair-noose, or ringle, which the Arabs put through the nose of their camels; and by which, a line being fastened to it, they lead and manage them as they please.

CHAP. XLI. VER. 1. *Canst thou draw out leviathan with an hook?*—*Hasselquist* (*Travels*, p. 440.) observes, that the leviathan means a crocodile, from the consideration that this voracious animal, far from being 'drawn up by a hook,' bites off and destroys all fishing-tackle of this kind, which is thrown out in the river. I found, says he, in one that I opened, 'two hooks,' which it had swallowed, one sticking in the stomach, and the other in a part of the thick membrane which covers the palate.

2. *A thorn.*—*Michaelis* supposes with more probability, that the Hebrew word חֵרֶץ, or חֶרֶץ, means here an iron ring, which being put over his jaws, or through them, after being perforated for the purpose, would prevent him from biting. See, also, *Parkhurst*.

6. *Shall thy companions, &c.*—'Will the companions of merchants drive a bargain for him? Shall he be portioned out among the Canaanites?' By 'the companies of merchants,' *Mr. Heath* understands the caravans who traded to Egypt by land; by 'the Canaanites,' I suppose, are meant the Phœnicians of Zidon, who trafficked thither by sea. The dividing, or portioning of him out, among the latter, means, perhaps, selling this creature in separate pieces, or members.—*Scott*.

7. *Or his head with fish-spears?*]—The Hebrew root, ^לש, of the word rendered ‘fish-spears,’ seems to have no connection in sense with spears. The Hebrew phrase may mean to insert, place, or set in; the Chaldee Targum on this verse runs literally thus: ‘Is it possible that thou shouldest place his skin in the booth, and his head in the shed, or hut, for fish?’ Agreeably to this idea, the whole verse may refer, as Gusset has observed, to the fishermen’s custom of hanging up in their huts the skins, or heads, of the strange, or monstrous, fishes they had taken; as hunters did those of wild beasts, and as our fox-hunters still nail up against the stable-door the heads of the foxes they have killed, —*Parkhurst’s Heb. Lex.*

8. *Remember the battle; do no more.*]—Rather, ‘Thou wilt no more remember the battle.’ That is, ‘thou wilt be instantly destroyed.’

10. *None is so fierce that dare stir him up, &c.*]—This alludes to a custom of this creature, namely, that when he is satiated with fish, he comes on shore, and sleeps among the reeds. See chap. iii. 8, where the same expression in the Hebrew is used.

11. *Who hath prevented me, &c.*]—‘Who hath made me any present, that I may requite him?’—*Heath.* Compare Micah vi. 6, 7.

Bp. Stock is decidedly of opinion, that the sublime address of the Almighty originally ended with this verse, and he thinks that the remaining 22 verses were added afterwards; which he calls a ‘superfetation’ that might have been well spared.

13. *Who can discover, &c.*]—The translation might be, ‘Who can uncover his mailed face?’ If in Job’s days they covered their war-horses in complete armour, the question will refer to the taking off the armour, and the leviathan’s skin will be represented by such an image. Then the second sentence may denote bridling him, after his armour is stripped off, for some other service. The most easy version of this latter sentence is that which our English Bible and Schultens give,

‘Who will bring his double bridle?’

Or who will come with his double bridle?’—*Scott.*

13. *Within his double bridle* (marginal reading).]—The double fold of his jaws. Thus, as Bochart observes, from Poll. Onom. the Greeks called those parts of the lips, which ended at the cheeks, *χαλινοι*, ‘bridles.’ This interpretation agrees best, not only with the structure of the preceding hemistich, but with the following verse.—*Parkhurst.*

14. *His teeth, &c.*]—The apparatus of teeth in the crocodile, to the number of threescore, Hieroz. p. ii. 778, perfectly satisfies this formidable description.

15. *His scales are his pride.*]—Rather, ‘His body resembles stray shields.’ The Septuagint has Ασπίδες χαλκείαι, ‘Shields of brass.’

15 to 17. *His scales, &c.*]—The indissoluble texture, and, perhaps, the largeness also of the scales, which compose the crocodile’s hide, are represented by the powerful images and figures in these verses.—*Scott.*

18. *By his neesings a light doth shine.*]—Such is the violence and heat of the air, which is repelled from his nose when he sneezes, that it sparkles in the sun-beams. This circumstance marks the force and fury of the animal.

18. *His eyes, &c.*]—This may happen, says Schultens, when the crocodile lifts his head above water in the night. His staring eyes, which are the first object that strikes the beholder, may then be compared to the dawning light. The eyes of the crocodile are said to be small; but, as Bochart observes, they are so remarkable, that when the Egyptians would represent the morning by an hieroglyphic, they painted a crocodile’s eye.

19—22. *Out of his mouth, &c.*]—Here the creature is described in pursuit of its prey on the land; as appears, from ver. 22, ‘Destruction danceth before him.’ His mouth is then open, his blood inflamed, his breath is thrown out with prodigious vehemence, it appears like volumes of smoke, and is heated to that degree, as to seem a flaming fire. The images which the sacred poet here uses, are indeed excessively strong and hyperbolical; especially that in ver. 21, ‘his breath kindleth coals.’ But Ovid did not scruple to paint the enraged boar in figures equally bold:

Fulmen ab ore venit, frondesque adflatibus ardent.

‘Lightning issueth from his mouth, and the boughs are set on fire by his breath.’—*Scott.*

20. *Out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething-pot or caldron.*]—The Hebrew word, מַן, is usually translated ‘a rush,’ or ‘a bulrush,’ and may probably refer to an ancient custom in the East of placing dishes of food on mats. D’Arvieux says, (*Voyage dans la Palestine*, p. 29) that a supper, which the inhabitants of a village in Palestine prepared for him, consisted of fried fish, eggs, rice, &c. placed upon a mat, or a round table made of straw stitched together. If the word rendered a ‘caldron’ in this passage have this meaning, it gives a very natural sense to the text, and adds variety.

22. *In his neck, &c.*]—Strength and destruction are here represented as animated beings. The former is seated on the

neck of the crocodile, to signify the extraordinary inflexibility of that part; the other leaps and dances before him, when he pursues his prey, to express the terrible slaughter which he makes.

‘Strength abideth upon his neck,
And Destruction danceth before him.’—*Scott.*

23, 24. *The flakes, &c.*]—The muscular flesh and viscera of this animal, are here represented as having a firmness of cohesion like that of stone and metal. The sentiment stript of its poetical dress amounts to no more, than that the flesh and inward parts are remarkably compact and tough. Theocritus says of a robust and gigantic man, ‘He hath flesh of iron.’—*Id.*

24. *His heart is as firm, &c.*]—These strong similes may denote not only a material, but also a moral hardness; his savage and unrelenting nature. Ælian, quoted by Schultens, calls the crocodile ‘A voracious devourer of flesh, and the most pitiless of animals.’—*Id.*

25. *By reason of breakings, they purify themselves, &c.*]—‘For very terror they fall to the ground.’—*Heath.*

The idea conveyed by שברים may relate to one of the natural effects of excessive fear; namely, the sudden relaxation of the alvus, and the discharge of its contents. The act of purifying will then follow as a matter of course.

26. *The habergeon.*]—Rather, ‘the javelin.’ The Hebrew word is שריה, ‘spiculum.’ Bochart observes that it is so explained by the Arabian lexicographers.—*Scott.*

30. *Sharp stones, &c.*]—The belly of the crocodile is penetrable by a bullet, and perhaps also by a sword; nevertheless it is hard enough to be insensible of pain, when he lies on the sharp stones and ragged rocks, which are in the bed of the Nile. In that part of the Nile where the cataracts are, and which the crocodiles mostly frequent, its bed is of granite marble; as is evident from the ridge of granite rocks, which there runs across its channel, and is the cause of those falls of water.—See *Norden’s Travels into Egypt*, p. 115, 8vo. and *Pococke’s Description of the East*, vol. i. p. 114, 115, 122.

31, 32. *He maketh the deep to boil, &c.*]—To give us a further idea of the force of this creature, says Scott, the poet describes the effects of its motion in the water. By ‘the sea’ is meant the Nile, which is called ‘the sea’ by the Hebrew prophets, and by the Arabs. ‘The deep’ is the deep places in that river. When a crocodile fifty feet in length dives to the bottom, the violent agitation of the water is justly compared to liquor boiling in a caldron. The mud raised by that agitation thickens

the water, and gives it a consistency like that of ointment. 'He maketh the sea [the Nile] to boil like a pot of ointment.' This simile will be still more exact, if, as it is said, the crocodile emits a strong scent when he plunges into the river. When a crocodile of the size above-mentioned is swimming on, or near the surface, he cuts the water like a ship, and makes it white with foam. At the same time, his tail, like a rudder, causes the waves behind him to froth and sparkle like a trail of light: 'He maketh a path to shine after him,' &c. These images are common among the poets.

—'Tumultuous boil the waves:
They toss, they foam, a wild confusion raise,
Like waters bubbling o'er the fiery blaze.'

Homer's Odyss. lib. xii. 236.

34. *He beholdeth all high things.*—Rather, 'He beholdeth all high creatures;' that is, 'he looks on them with defiance and contempt.' I think the reader will agree with me, says Bp. Stock, that this appendix, as I have ventured to call it, abounds too much in amplification, and is too luxuriant to accord with the majestic simplicity of the other parts of the poem.

CHAP. XLII. VER. 3. *Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge?*—Rather, 'Who is he that is secret in counsel beyond all knowledge?'—See *Schultens* and *Scott*.

The particle *לְבַד*, which in our translation is rendered *without*, means also *above, beyond*, as *Heath* justly observes.

7. *Ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*—They had represented Job's afflictions as laid upon him by God for his wickedness. This was not right.

They likewise grounded their censure on a notion, that wicked men never prosper long in the present world; and thence inferred, that great calamities are proofs of great antecedent guilt. This was not right.

Job, on the contrary, had maintained, that all things happen alike to all; and that therefore no man's moral character can be ascertained by his external condition. This was right, and is here pronounced to be the truth.

Bp. Hare remarks, that Elihu's speech is neither praised nor censured by the Almighty: and he thence concludes, that Elihu was the writer of the poem. But Elihu is not commended, because he was in the main of the same opinion, concerning the course of Providence, with the three friends; neither is he blamed, because he had not condemned Job for a wicked man,

but censured only his behaviour towards God in his affliction.—*Scott.*

8. *Seven bullocks and seven rams.*—See Levit. xxiii. 18. Numb. xxiii. 1.

10. *The Lord turned the captivity of Job.*—This is a proverbial expression, which denotes, as Cocceius observes, the end of misery, and the restoration of happiness and prosperity. See Ps. cxxvi. 1. 4; Jer. xxix. 14; Zeph. ii. 7.

11. *Every man also gave, &c.*—It was an ancient custom, which is still observed in the East, never to visit a person of distinction without paying him the compliment of a present. It is uncertain whether one kind of present made to Job on this occasion, was a sheep, or a piece of money, that had the figure of a sheep stamped upon it. The Hebrew word is קשיטה, and the Septuagint reads ἀρνυδά μίαν, ‘one ewe lamb.’ See note on Gen. xxxiii. 19.—*Scott.*

12. *Fourteen thousand sheep, &c.*—Michaëlis remarks, that this exact doubling of his former possessions, and also giving him exactly the same number of children that he had before, looks more like fiction than history. Such precision is seldom known in the ordinary course of things.—See note on ch. i. 3.

14. *And he called the name of the first, Jemima.*—To vary names, by substituting a word similar in sound, is very prevalent in the East. The following extract from Sir Thomas Roe (p. 425) is a striking example of this circumstance.

They speak very much in honor of Moses, whom they call ‘Moosacalim Alla,’ Moses the publisher of the mind of God. So of Abraham, whom they call ‘Ibrahim carim Alla,’ Abraham the honored, or the friend, of God. So of Ishmael, whom they call ‘Ismal,’ the sacrifice of God. So of Jacob, whom they call ‘Acob,’ the blessing of God. So of Joseph, whom they call ‘Eesoff,’ the betrayed for God. So of David, whom they call ‘Dahood,’ the lover and praiser of God. So of Solomon, whom they call ‘Selymon,’ the wisdom of God: all expressed in short Arabian words, which they sing in ditties, to their particular remembrances. Many men are called by these names: others are called ‘Mahmud,’ or ‘Chaan,’ which signifies the moon; or Frista, which signifies a star. And they call their women by the names of spices, or odors; or of pearls, or precious stones; or else by other names of pretty, or pleasing signification. So Job called his daughters by names, which, as Jarchi observes, are expressive of their loveliness and beauty.

Jemima, in Arabic, signifies ‘a dove.’ Kezia is derived from

the cassia aromatica, which was highly esteemed by the ancient Orientalists, as we may learn from Ps. xlv. 8. The name of the third daughter is formed of two words signifying 'horn' and 'stibium.' The eastern women used stibium as a paint to darken their eyebrows, and render their eyes more brilliant. See note on Ezek. xxiii. 40. The horn, in the estimation of the Hebrews, and other eastern people, was not only the significant emblem of power, but also of excellence, of beauty, and of plenty. Job's daughter, therefore, was called 'the horn of stibium;' from having more natural beauty in her eyes, &c. than other women could procure by means of art. Such, at least, is the comment of *Spanheim*, *Mercier*, and *Grotius*.

PSALMS.

INTRODUCTION.

OF all the books in the Old Testament there is none of greater value and importance than that of the Psalms. Considered merely as a collection of poetry, these sacred Hymns will be always admired for their pathos and sublimity; but when read as devotional exercises, the highest praise that we can express will fall far short of their transcendant merit. Conversant with general truths, as all genuine poetry must be, they are wonderfully adapted to every age and every church. Whether the pious believer is disposed to indulge the exalted sentiments of praise and thanksgiving towards the Almighty Father of his being; to pour out his soul in penitence and prayer; to bewail, with tears of contrition, past offences; to magnify the goodness and the mercies of God; or to dwell with all the ecstasy of a devoted heart on his divine attributes of wisdom and power; the Psalms will afford him the most perfect models and examples for expressing all these sentiments and feelings of devotion. 'Composed upon particular occasions,' says Bp. Horne, 'but designed for general use; delivered out as services for Israelites under the Law, yet no less adapted to the circumstances of Christians under the Gospel, they present religion to us in the most engaging dress; communicating truths, which philosophy could never investigate, in a style which poetry can never equal; while history is made the vehicle of prophecy, and

creation lends all its charms to paint the glories of Redemption. Calculated alike to profit, and to please, they inform the understanding, elevate the affections, and entertain the imagination. Indited under the influence of Him, to whom all hearts are known, and all events foreknown, they suit mankind in all situations; grateful as the manna which descended from above, and conformed itself to every palate. The fairest productions of human wit, after a few perusals, like gathered flowers, wither in our hands, and lose their fragrancy; but these unfading plants of Paradise become, as we are accustomed to them, still more and more beautiful; their bloom appears to be daily heightened; fresh odors are emitted, and new sweets extracted from them. He who hath once tasted their excellences, will desire to taste them yet again; and he who tastes them oftenest will relish them best.'

But this is not their highest merit; the Psalms are to be chiefly valued for the many notices and express predictions which they contain, not only of the Messiah's office, character, and kingdom, but of his sufferings and death. This does not rest on the fallible criticisms and conjectures of commentators, but on the concurrent testimony and sanction of evangelists and apostles, who have referred to the Psalms at least on fifty different occasions; nay, even our blessed Lord himself appealed 'to the things that were written in them' concerning himself, Luke xxiv. 44; and his last expiring words on the cross were a quotation from this divine book. (Matt. xxvii. 46.) To increase our love and veneration for it, we may suppose, with great probability, that he and his disciples occasionally sang some of those divine hymns, as forming a part of their devotions, when they retired to the favorite Mount of Olives.

They are called the Psalms of David, because he was the principal author of them, and is styled, by way of eminence, 'The sweet Psalmist of Israel.' So, likewise, the Book of Proverbs bears the name of Solomon, though we know he was not the entire author of it; and the Elements of Geometry

are called Euclid's, though he only collected and arranged them, and perhaps supplied some deficiencies. The same remark is applicable to other books.

Some of the Psalms, it is probable, are as ancient as the time of Moses (see Psalm xc.), and others certainly were composed during the calamitous period of the Babylonish captivity, if not after it. Without admitting, with Rudinger, and others, that a few are of as late a date as the Maccabees, they may be fairly said to comprise a period of, at least, nine hundred years. In our present Hebrew copies, seventy-one are ascribed to David, some perhaps erroneously; but then he was probably the author of many, which now appear anonymously. Beside Moses and David, the venerable prophet Samuel, and the school of prophets which he instituted, are supposed to have contributed to the present collection, as first formed, or adopted by Ezra. The names also of Asaph, Heman, Ethan, Jeduthun, and the sons of Korah, appear in the titles of some, and perhaps that of the pathetic prophet and poet, Jeremiah, should be prefixed to others.

The Masoretes, or Jewish Rabbis, have divided the Psalms into five books; not that there appears any good reason for such division; but their only notion seems to have been, that they might equal the number of the books of Moses, which form the Pentateuch. According to this division, the first book ended with the forty first Psalm; the second with the seventy second; the third with the eighty ninth; the fourth with the one hundred and sixth; and the fifth, of course, with the last, or one hundred and fiftieth.

With respect to the titles of the different Psalms, the various occasions on which they were probably composed, &c. the reader will find such information as appeared most interesting and satisfactory in the notes.

A Table of the PSALMS classed under their several Subjects.

PRAYERS.

- I. Prayers for pardon of sin: Psalm 6, 25, 38, 51, 130.
Psalms styled Penitential: 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143.
- II. Prayers composed when the Psalmist was deprived of an opportunity of the public exercise of religion: Psalm 42, 43, 63, 84.
- III. Prayers wherein the Psalmist seems extremely dejected, though not totally deprived of consolation under his afflictions: Psalm 13, 22, 69, 77, 88, 143.
- IV. Prayers wherein the Psalmist asketh help of God, in consideration of his own integrity, and the uprightness of his cause: Psalm 7, 17, 26, 35.
- V. Prayers expressing the firmest trust and confidence in God under afflictions: Psalm 3, 16, 27, 31, 54, 56, 57, 61, 62, 71, 86.
- VI. Prayers composed when the people of God were under affliction, or persecution: Psalm 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 83, 89, 94, 102, 123, 137.
- VII. The following are likewise prayers in time of trouble and affliction: Psalm 4, 5, 11, 28, 41, 55, 59, 64, 70, 109, 120, 140, 141, 142.
- VIII. Prayers of intercession: Psalm 20, 67, 122, 132, 144.

PSALMS OF THANKSGIVING.

- I. Thanksgivings for mercies vouchsafed to particular persons: Psalm 9, 18, 22, 30, 34, 40, 75, 103, 108, 116, 118, 138.
- II. Thanksgivings for mercies vouchsafed to the Israelites in general: Psalm 46, 48, 65, 66, 68, 76, 81, 85, 98, 105, 124, 126, 129, 135, 136, 149.

PSALMS OF PRAISE AND ADORATION, DISPLAYING THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

- I. General acknowledgments of God's goodness and mercy, and particularly his care and protection of good men: Psalm 23, 34, 36, 91, 100, 103, 107, 117, 121, 145, 146.
- II. Psalms displaying the power, majesty, glory, and other attributes of the Divine Being: Psalm 8, 19, 24, 29, 33, 47, 50, 65, 66, 76, 77, 93, 95, 96, 97, 99, 104, 111, 113, 114, 115, 134, 139, 147, 148, 150.

INSTRUCTIVE PSALMS.

- I. The different characters of good and bad men. The happiness of the one, and the miseries of the other, are represented in the following Psalms: 1, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 24, 25, 32, 34, 36, 37, 50, 52, 53, 58, 73, 75, 84, 91, 92, 94, 112, 119, 121, 125, 127, 128, 133.
- II. The excellence of God's law: Psalm 19, 119.
- III. The vanity of human life: Psalm 39, 49, 90.
- IV. Advice to magistrates: Psalm 82, 101.
- V. The virtue of humility: Psalm 131.

PSALMS MORE EMINENTLY AND DIRECTLY PROPHETICAL.

Psalm 2, 16, 22, 40, 45, 68, 72, 87, 110, 118.

HISTORICAL PSALMS.

Psalm 78, 105, 106.

PSALM I.

VER. 1. *Blessed is the man, &c.*—In this verse three different degrees of transgression are described: 1. That which consists in listening to the counsel of the ungodly. 2. That of persisting, or continuing in sin; And 3. That of joining the society of the ungodly, or acquiescing in the wickedness of those who scoff at religion.

1. *In the seat.*—Houbigant, Bp. Lowth, and others, prefer, 'in the company, or assembly.' But, 'to sit in the seat, or chair,' may mean not only to associate with the wicked, but to preside in their assemblies.—See *Rosenmüller*.

3. *A tree planted by the rivers of water.*—The elegance and the beauty of this allusion to a tree will be felt by every reader of taste. 'The rivers of water,' in this verse, are the sluices, or trenches, through which water was conveyed in rivulets over the gardens of the East, in order to render them more fertile. See note on Deut. xi. 10.

5. *The ungodly shall not stand.*—That is, 'shall not make their cause good.' The Chaldee reads, 'they shall not be justified.'

6. *The Lord knoweth.*—That is, 'he superintends and approves their conduct.'

6. *Shall perish.*—'Shall lead them to destruction.'

PSALM II. This psalm appears to have been written by

David, when the nations which he had subdued were meditating a revolt; or were perhaps already in open rebellion. The Jewish Rabbis consider it as prophetic of the Messiah. The Christian church has always understood it in the same light, from the citations in the New Testament, particularly by the apostle, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, by giving the first nine verses the title of 'the kingdom of Christ,' and by appointing it to be read on Easter-day.

1. *Why do the heathen rage?*]—Rather, 'why are the nations in a tumult?' The allusion appears to be to the Philistines, and the factions among the Jewish people, who endeavoured to prevent David from being king. Cocceius translates the Hebrew verb *וַיִּסְבּוּ*, 'to assemble unanimously, for the purpose of accomplishing some object;' which seems to be its proper meaning here.

2. *Against the Lord.*]—That is, 'against the will or counsel of the Lord.'

3. *Let us break their bands, &c.*]—Let us resist the authority of this new monarch, who pretends to reign by the power of the Most High; let us violate his laws, and throw off the restraint which he would impose on us.

6. *Yet have I set, &c.*]—Rather, 'I, even I, have anointed my king over Sion, the mountain of my holiness.' The Septuagint reads, 'I have been appointed king by him.'

7. *I will declare the decree.*]—The decree concerning David was this: 'Thou art my Son,' &c. God himself was properly king over Israel, Ps. lxxxix. 18. David styles him 'his God, and his king,' Ps. lxxviii. 24; but he declared concerning David, 'Thou art my son. I will make him my first-born,' Ps. lxxxix. 27, namely, by giving him the rights of primogeniture, and advancing him as such to the kingdom. Kings, in general, are styled 'gods,' and 'sons of the Most High,' in Scripture, Ps. lxxxii. 1, 6, and also by profane writers. Vid. *Callimachi Hymn.* in Jov. v. 80. But there is a peculiar propriety in this expression, 'Thou art my Son,' as applied to David; because God, in a great measure, by fixing him on the throne, and making it hereditary in his family, transferred the kingdom and government to David and his posterity. When God adds, 'I have begotten thee,' it implies his being made son and heir by adoption. The words 'this day,' refer to the day in which David received the divine decree, or constitution, by the hand of Nathan. These words are cited by St. Paul, in his sermon to the Jews at Antioch, as predictive of the resurrection of Christ; and by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews they are applied to him as a proof of his 'being made better;'

that is, exalted to higher honor and dignity, 'than the angels,' by his resurrection to eternal life, Heb. i. 3, 4, 5. 'God having declared him to be his son with power, by his resurrection from the dead, and session at the right hand of his Majesty on high.' See Rom. i. 4, and Acts iv. 25, which contains a full proof that this psalm was written by David.—*Dr. Dodd.*

8. *The uttermost parts of the earth.*—The literal meaning of these words is, that David should extend the limits of his kingdom as far as the river Euphrates. But when applied to Christ and the propagation of the gospel, they may be considered as a prophecy, which has been already fulfilled in a great measure, and will in due time be fully accomplished.

11. *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*—Lest any should look on the service of God as a burden, the psalmist bids us perform it with joy; and, on the other hand, lest our joy should prove to be rash, he bids us temper it with fear. Joy, therefore, and fear, are two qualifications here recommended to us as equally necessary to dispose our minds to the offices of religion. Joy, indeed, without fear is only proper for the state of heaven, and for those blessed souls, who are confirmed in grace, and can sin no more; but for frailer mortals, who are always either under the power of sin, or at least under the assaults of it; for such to rejoice without the restraint of fear, is pure ignorance of our state, as well as an occasion to betray us into worse. No disposition but joy is fit to express our sense of the divine goodness, and keep us affectionately devout; no disposition but fear is fit to express our sense of human frailty, and keep us solicitously humble: both of them joined, consummate the temper of a good man's heart.—*Dean Young.*

Instead of 'trembling,' we may render, 'with zeal and alacrity.' See note on 2 Cor. vii. 15. Bp. Horsley's version is, 'with diffidence.'

12. *Kiss the Son.*—The son must here primarily refer to David, who had been lately adopted by God, ver. 7. To 'kiss,' means to reverence, obey, and treat with deference. To kiss the hand of a sovereign is still a mark of homage. In the East, a kiss was not only a mark of reverence from inferiors to superiors, but also an act of adoration. See note on Job xxxi. 27.—The Hebrew verb נָחַס, which we translate 'perish,' means 'to stray, to wander,' or 'to lose any advantage, in consequence of mistaking the proper means of pursuing it.' Dr. Chandler renders this clause of the verse, 'and like wandering sheep ye utterly perish.' The two latter clauses would be more intelligible, if they were connected together, as they are in some of

the ancient versions, thus: 'When his wrath is kindled but a little, blessed are all they that put their trust in him.'

PSALM III. VER. 2. *Selah.*—This word frequently occurs in the course of these divine hymns; but it is not easy to ascertain its precise use, or meaning. Some imagine, that it directed the time of the music, and was, perhaps, equivalent to our word '*slow*;' or, according to some of our provincial dialects, '*slaw*;' which, in a rapid pronounciation, is very similar to the Hebrew word. The Septuagint interprets it by '*diapsalma*;' which, according to Suidas, means a change of the song, or modulation. Dr. Wall conjectures, that it is a note directing that the last words to which it is added should be repeated by the chorus; and observes, that it is always put after some remarkable, or pathetic clause. Parkhurst and others are of opinion, that it was intended only to direct the particular attention of the reader to the passage. Others think that it marks a new sense, or a change of the metre. St. Jerome says, that *Selah* connects what follows with what went before, and farther expresses that the words to which it is affixed are of eternal moment; that is, are not applicable to any particular person, or temporary circumstances, but ought to be remembered by all men, and for ever. Hence the Chaldee paraphrast renders it, '*for ever*.' So, also, Aquila. Buxtorf, Foster, and others, are of opinion, that *Selah* has no signification, but that it is a note of the ancient music, of which we are ignorant. Aben Ezra says, that it is like the conclusion of a prayer, answering nearly to '*Amen*;' and that the Jews, at the end of their epitaphs and books, generally put *Selah*. See an ancient form of prayer in Prideaux, (Vol. 1: p. 297, fol. edit.) where *Selah* occurs three times.

Calmet thinks, that *Selah* was sometimes put in the margin of the Jewish psalters, to indicate, that a musical pause was to be made, and that the tune was ended. Meibomius is of opinion, that it means '*a repeat*,' and is equivalent to the Italian *Da Capo*. Rosenmüller, after retailing the conjectures of many critics, is best pleased with that which supposes a rest, or pause, is indicated for the vocal performers, and that the musical instruments only are to be heard. If this opinion be well-founded, it must have been followed by something like our concluding symphonies.

8. *Thy blessing is upon thy people.*—Rather, '*Let thy blessing, O Lord, be upon thy people*.'

7. *Upon the cheek-bone.*—Rather, '*on the jaw*.' The allusion is to a wild beast, who is disabled from tearing and devouring his prey, by having his jaw smitten, and his teeth broken.

PSALM IV, title. *Neginoth*.]—This is the name of the musical instrument, on which this psalm was to be accompanied. Of its form and construction we must be contented to be ignorant. It may be inferred, however, from the etymology of the word, נגינות, that it was not a wind instrument; but played on with the fingers, or struck with a plectrum, or bow.

1. *O God of my righteousness.*]—‘O God, who art the judge of my righteousness,’ or, as Dr. Waterland explains it, ‘Who art to do me right; to whom I apply for justice.’ Allowing for the Hebrew idiom, we may consider it, perhaps, as entirely equivalent to, ‘O my righteous God.’

2. *How long will ye turn my glory into shame?*]—By dividing the Hebrew expression ללמה, into two words, and substituting a ב for a כ, thus, לב למה, we may read, with the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and other ancient versions, ‘How long will ye be heavy of heart?’ which, Bp. Lowth says, is undoubtedly the true reading.—*Merrick, and Street*.

2. *Leasing.*]—An obsolete word, derived from the Saxon, signifying falsehood and lies.

4. *Stand in awe, and sin not.*]—The Septuagint and other ancient versions read, ‘Be ye angry and sin not:’ and the Hebrew word, רגז, means to be agitated with any passion, whether grief, fear, or anger; and so St. Paul recites it, Ephesians iv. 26.

5. *Sacrifices of righteousness.*]—That is, such sacrifices as are right and proper; or such as the Law prescribes. In Hebrew, when two nouns are thus in construction, the latter often assumes the property of an epithet to the former.

6. *There be many that say, &c.*]—The great pursuit of man is after happiness. It is the first and strongest desire of his nature: but our pleasures and enjoyments slip from us in every stage of life; and there is a plain distinction to be made between pleasure and happiness; for though there can be no happiness without pleasure, yet the converse of the proposition will not hold true. We are so made, that from the common qualifications of our appetites, and the impressions of a thousand objects, we snatch the one like a transient gleam, without being suffered to taste the other, and enjoy that perpetual sunshine of fair weather which constantly attends it. These are only to be found in religion, in the consciousness of virtue, and in the sure and certain hopes of a better life, which brighten all our prospects, and leave no room to dread disappointments, because the expectation from them is built upon a rock.—*Sterne*.

6, 7, 8. Dr. Geddes thinks that these three verses refer to that period when David and his people were distressed for pro-

visions, and were seasonably relieved, first by Ziba, and then by Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai. See 2 Sam. xvi. 1; and xvii. 27. He translates the original, therefore, 'Jehovah! the light of thy countenance hath with splendor beamed forth upon us! thou hast given gladness to mine heart! Since their corn, and wine, and oil, have increased, with them I securely lie down, and sleep; for thou, alone, Jehovah! in confidence makest me repose.'

Grotius connects the latter part of verse 6, with the following, thus: 'O Lord, if thou wilt lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, thou wilt give greater gladness to my heart than is usually felt when corn, wine, and oil, are produced in abundance.' Our present translation will be sufficiently clear if we understand by 'their corn,' the corn, or harvest, of men in general; and it should be remembered that, in the poetical parts of Scripture, the antecedent is thus frequently understood.

PSALM V, title. *Nehiloth*.]—From the derivation of this word, we may conclude, that it was some wind instrument; but whether it was of the flute kind, or somewhat resembling the bagpipe, it is uncertain. See *Rosenmüller*.

9. *Their inward part*.]—That is, 'their minds, or consciences.'

10. *Destroy thou them, O God*.]—The Septuagint, the Vulgate, and Arabic versions, read, 'Judge them, O Lord.'

PSALM VI, title. *Sheminith*.]—A harp of eight strings. See note on 1 Chron. xv. 21. It appears from this title, that the 'Sheminith' was used as an accompaniment to the 'Neginoth.'

2. *My bones*.]—In the language of Scripture, 'bones, reins, bowels, and inward parts,' signify the same as heart, feeling, the seat of intellect, and passion. See note on Job xx. 20.

3. *How long?*]—There is an ellipsis here, which is very properly supplied in the old translation of our common prayer, 'How long wilt thou punish me?'

7. *It waxeth old*.]—Parkhurst thinks that the meaning of the Hebrew verb עָתָקָה, which we render, 'it waxeth old,' is, 'sunk with grief.'

10. *Let them return*.]—Rather, 'Let them retreat, or depart, and desist from persecuting me.'

PSALM VII, title. *Shiggaion*.]—Houbigant, Parkhurst, and Fenwick, think that this word means 'a wandering song,' and that it was probably composed by David, when he was obliged to remove from place to place, in order to avoid the persecutions of Saul. Dr. Kennicott and others are of opinion, that the word is derived from the Arabic, signifying that the divine

author, when he composed this psalm, was overwhelmed with anxiety and grief. Dr. Geddes therefore calls it 'an elegy.'

Cush.—It is uncertain who is here meant by Cush. We read of no such person in the history of David; and therefore some propose a slight change in the Hebrew name, and would read קיש, Kish; that is, the father of Saul, instead of כוש. Others think that Shimei is meant by Cush: but why should he be called Cush? In order to remove this difficulty, Dr. Geddes considers the word not as a proper name, but an appellative denoting reproach. The meaning of the Hebrew name Cush is 'black,' and this epithet, in all languages, when transferred to the mind, expresses moral turpitude. Hence Horace says,

'Hic niger est: hunc tu Romane, caveto.'

Sat. lib. l. iv.

'This man is vile; here, Roman, fix your mark;

His soul is *black*, as his complexion's *dark*.'—FRANCIS.

If this be admitted, the word Cush will apply to the Benjamite, as an epithet, signifying that he was a calumniator and a villain; which will agree very well with the contents of this Psalm.

2. *Lest he tear.*—The Arabic version reads, 'Lest they tear me.' If the present reading be right, we may suppose that David particularly alludes to Saul, his great enemy and persecutor.

3. *If I have done this.*—This is probably an allusion to the reproach of Shimei, who called him 'a bloody man, and a man of Belial,' 2 Sam. xvi. 7.

4. *I have delivered him, &c.*—This seems to refer to Saul, whose life David spared more than once, when it was in his power to kill him.

6. *The judgment that thou hast commanded.*—That is, according to the rules of justice, which thou hast prescribed, or laid down, in the Law.

7. *Compass thee about.*—An allusion to the Jewish rite of going round the temple and altar during the time of divine worship.

7. *Return thou on high.*—Rather, 'Be thou seated on high; resume thy seat of judgment.' This is an allusion to courts of judicature, in which the judge is always seated on an elevated chair, or bench.

8. *And according to mine integrity.*—Houbigant has here happily restored from the Chaldee a word dropped out of the Hebrew text, which seems necessary to make out the construc-

tion and the sense. He reads, כְּתַמִּי גַמְלִי עָלַי, i. e. 'Recompense me according to mine integrity.' Vid. Psa. xiii. 6, where the same word, גַּמַּל, here supplied, occurs.—*Merrick*,

11. *God judgeth, &c.*]—There is a very observable change of person here. The former part of the psalm has been an invocation of Jehovah, in the second person. The latter is a celebration of his justice, mercy, and providence, speaking of Jehovah in the third person; yet the psalm does not seem to be one of the responsive kind. Perhaps it ought to be divided into two. We shall see more than one instance hereafter, in which there is reason to think, that the division of the Psalms, one from the other, has not been properly preserved.

12. *If he turn not, he, &c.*]—The first *he* refers to David's enemy, Saul, we may suppose, and the second to God.

15. *Is fallen into the ditch.*]—Rather, 'into the trap, or snare, which he made for others.'

PSALM VIII, title. *Gittith*.]—The word גִּתִּית, *getith*, signifies wine-presses. The Septuagint has *Δηρυων*. What is meant by these wine-presses, says Houbigant, we are utterly ignorant. Some interpreters, however, think that a musical instrument brought from Gath is implied; for the Chaldee renders it, 'On the harp, which David brought from Gath.' Both may be true; the instrument bearing this name might have been used by the people of Gath; and the Jews might have adopted it from them. It might afterwards have become the favorite instrument among the festivity and dances of the vintage.—See *Street*.

Accordingly, this triumphant psalm is thought to have been composed by David on this occasion of his victory over Goliath.

2. *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, &c.*]—The first and most natural signification of these words is an allusion to the case of David himself; who, in comparison of Goliath, was but a mere child: and God's enabling him to gain a complete victory over this gigantic champion, was not only a proper punishment for his defiance of the armies of the living God; but likewise sufficient to make the whole army of the Philistines adore the omnipotence of the God of Israel in reverential silence. Our saviour applies it to himself, Matt. xxi. 16, and it may with great propriety be applied to the first preachers of the gospel; who, though ignorant, illiterate, and void of either power, or interest, triumphed over the wisdom of the wise, and put to silence the cavils of the subtil. Though some imagine that this quotation was applied by Christ to children, literally. It is plain, however, that the scribes and pharisees were not offended at the people, but at their expressions. When they

cried 'Hosannah to the son of David,' they were displeased, and said unto Jesus, 'Hearest thou what they say?' Matt. xxi. 15, 16. i. e. how they ascribe the power of salvation to thee, who art but a mere man? 'Is that acclamation, Hosannah, which signifies 'Save now,' and is often used in our addresses to God, fit to be given to thee?' Our Saviour replies, 'Yes; for have ye not read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength?' and though in this low and abject state I appear as a man, and seem in my present condition to be as incapable of such power, as a sucking child is of the greatest enterprise; yet am I to save my faithful disciples, and to subdue the enemies of my mission, according to the sense of that prophetic passage.' Though the evangelist cites these verses according to the Septuagint version, 'Thou hast perfected praise;' yet it is most probable our Saviour used the Hebrew phrase, which renders the sense clearer; and though the persons crying 'Hosannah' are called *children* in our version; yet it is most likely they were grown persons; for they were the persons, or multitude, who conducted Jesus to Jerusalem. The Greek word, which we render *children*, is generally applied to menial servants of all ages; and in Matt. xiv. 2, it is applied to Herod's courtiers, or servants.—*Dr. Dodd.*

The supposition of Grotius, that this expression relates only to the admirable provision, by which infants are nourished and cherished at the breast, appears rather far-fetched, and renders the figure too limited in its application. The occasion requires a wider and more general sense. By 'babes and sucklings,' the inspired writer describes men with reference to their intellectual acquirements, and the growth of their understanding. He means to say, that persons without study and without science, persons who may be said to be mere infants in knowledge, but of simple, unsophisticated minds, could effectually refute the oppositions of atheism, see the gross corruptions of superstition, and perfect the praise of God, by ascribing to Him, and to Him only, their own existence, and the wonderful works of creation. The context will shew, that this was the sense, nearly, in which our blessed Lord understood the expression of the Psalmist, Matt. xxi. 16.

2. *Hast thou ordained strength.*—The Septuagint reads 'Hast thou perfected praise;' and it is so quoted by our Saviour, Matt. xxi. 16. The translation may be, 'From the mouths even of babes and sucklings, thou derivest force against thine enemies, and puttest to silence the enemy and the avenger.'

4. *What is man, &c.*—'The son of man,' and 'the sons of men,' says Bp. Patrick, are phrases which often occur, and

which in Scripture language seem to belong to princes, and sometimes to the greatest of princes. See Ps. lxxx. 17, where it signifies Hezekiah; Ps. cxlvi. 3, where it signifies any prince, however great in dignity, or eminent in power. So Ps. lviii. 1, the counsellors of Saul are called 'sons of men.' The original of this language, I conceive, is to be drawn from the common manner of speech among the Hebrews, who called the chief of any kind by the whole kind. So they call man 'creature,' Mark xvi. 15, because he is the prime creature here below. So a king, or eminent person, they call 'the son of man,' because he is the prime, or chief, among 'the sons of men.' Hence we may learn what to understand by that title, which the blessed Saviour so often gives himself; 'The son of man,' or rather, 'That son of man:' i.e. the Messiah, the Lord's anointed; that great prince whom God promised to send into the world. It can have no other meaning in John v. 22, 27, where he says, 'God hath committed all judgment unto him, because he is the son (or that son) of man;' that is, the great person, whom God appointed to be the Lord and Governor of all things.—*Dr. Dodd.*

8. *And whatsoever.*—These words appear to have been improperly introduced by our translators. The psalmist is not enumerating any different species of animals; but describing the property of fish, which is to pass, in all directions, through the paths, or depths, of the sea. The relative *which*, therefore, only should have been supplied.

PSALM IX, title. *Muth-labben.*—More than twenty copies of Dr. Kennicott's collection, and forty of De Rossi's, have עלמות, *almuth*, instead of על מות, in two words.

Now עלמות signifies 'damsels,' or 'virgins.' See Ps. lxviii. 25; and לבן means, 'with a youth;' indicating the musical performers of this psalm.—See *Noldius*.

From the regular and frequent change of the person in this psalm, (for it sometimes speaks *of* and sometimes *to* Jehovah,) it appears that it is of the responsive kind; that the different persons, who sang it, are pointed out in the title; and that the whole psalm was performed by a chorus of virgins, to whom a youth made alternate responses.—See *Street*.

It is supposed, that the chorus of virgins sang the first six verses. The youth from 7 to 9 inclusively. The 10th was sung by virgins. The three next by the youth. The 14th by virgins. The three following by the youth, and all the rest by the chorus.

17. *Into hell.*—Rather, 'into the grave,' the state of departed souls, or the place of the dead.

PSALM X. It is not known by whom this psalm was composed, nor on what occasion. It contains a lively description of the insolent and wicked abuse of power by men who have no religion, and who delight in oppressing their poor dependents. Mudge observes, that the subject of this psalm is similar to that of the 59th, and that both of them seem to have been composed at the time when the Assyrians began to invade the kingdom, in the reign of Hezekiah.

3. *The wicked, &c.*]—‘The wicked glorieth in the completion of his wishes; and the rapacious calleth himself blessed.’—*Dr. Geddes.*

Others interpret this verse, ‘The impious man pleases himself in his own lust; and the covetous despises Jehovah, and congratulates himself.’—See *Merrick.*

5. *Grievous.*]—That is, calculated to lay grief on others. Some read ‘perverse; inclined to mischief.’

5. *Puffeth.*]—The act of puffing with the mouth, or crying *pooh, pish, pshaw, &c.* is still a mark of derision and contempt.

8. *His eyes are privily set against the poor.*]—That is, they are engaged in watching every opportunity to take advantage of him.

9. *He doth, &c.*]—This sentence would be better inverted, ‘When he draweth him into his net he doth catch the poor.’ Or, more literally, ‘He catcheth the poor by drawing him into his net.’ ‘Poor,’ often means, wretched, helpless, afflicted.

10. *By his strong ones.*]—Rather, ‘Into his strong toils, or snares.’ The word *ones* should have been printed in italics, as it is added by our translators.

12. *The humble.*]—The Hebrew word עניים here means, ‘the oppressed and afflicted.’

13. *Require it.*]—Rather, ‘inquire into it.’

16. *The heathen are perished out of his land.*]—The Chaldee paraphrase, the Septuagint, and Arabic versions, have this verb in the future tense, and read, ‘shall perish.’ Street, therefore, conjectures, that the original word was יאבדו. Others would read, in the optative mood, ‘should perish out of his land.’

18. *That the man of the earth may no more oppress.*]—*Dr. Geddes* renders this, ‘That no man henceforth be expelled from the land.’ If this interpretation be admitted, we may suppose from ver. 16, and from the general tenor of the psalm, that it was composed soon after the invasion of Shalmaneser, and before the Babylonish captivity.

PSALM XI. VER. 1. *To your mountain.*]—Rather, ‘To the mountains.’

3. *The foundations.*—That is, of justice; the laws of civilized society.

3. *If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?*—The Hebrew word for righteous is *tsadik*, which should here be *tsarich*. The *daleth*, or *d*, has been mistaken for the *resch*, or *r*; and the *koph*, or *k*, for the *cheth*, or *ch*. The great similarity of the *daleth* and *cheth* is well known, and the other letters, though not alike in figure, are in sound; and when dictated might easily be written the one for the other. *Tsarich*, means ‘tower,’ and here ‘superstructure;’ see 1 Sam. xiii. 6, (where the plural is rendered ‘high places’) also Judg. ix. 46, 49, and the sense will be complete if the version be: ‘If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the superstructure do? How shall the arch stand, if the foundation be undermined?’

Houbigant, Lowth, and Merrick, despaired of seeing this passage restored.

David had said, ver. 1, ‘I trust in God, then why should I fly?’ His friends reply, ‘If the foundations be privily undermined by insidious enemies, how shall the building stand?’ David answers, ‘The Lord is in his holy temple,’ &c. &c.—*Weston*.

4. *His eyelids.*—Rather, ‘His eyebrows.’ This is a bold metaphor, says Dr. Geddes, but by no means unnatural. When we examine any thing seriously, the eyebrows are sensibly affected, and visibly exerted. The Septuagint reads, ‘His eyes behold the poor.’ This appears to have been originally in the Hebrew text; and, as Bp. Lowth observes, restores the parallelism with the Hebrew hemistich.

6. *Snares.*—This word in Scriptural language often signifies extraordinary punishments. A snare not only catches, but frequently destroys.

PSALM XII. VER. 7. *Keep them.*—Two MSS. read תשמרנו, ‘Preserve us,’ which is supported by St. Jerome and the Arabic version. The sense would be more clearly preserved in the precatory form, ‘Keep us, O Lord, preserve us for ever from this generation.’

8. *Walk on every side.*—That is, they are at large, enjoying their full licence, and go unpunished.

PSALM XIII. VER. 6. *I will sing.*—The conclusion of this psalm is manifestly defective: it ends with an odd hemistich, wanting its correspondent. The Septuagint has happily preserved it. Καὶ ψαλῶ τῷ ὀνόματι Κυρίου τὰ ὑψίστα. ואומר שם יהוה עליון: that is, ‘And will sing praise to the name of the Lord most high.’ The same sentence that ends Psalm vii. The only doubt which arises here, is from a scholion in the Vatican MS. which says, that this hemistich was not to be found in

any of the versions of the Tetrapla, nor in the edition of Eusebius, nor in the Hebrew; and from a scholion of Hesychius, which says, that this verse was marked with a lemniscus, to shew that it was a double translation of the same words. The scholia seem to contradict one another; for if it was marked with a lemniscus, it must have been in the Tetrapla, or Hexapla of Origen: and that it is not a double translation of the single hemistich now in the Hebrew, is apparent from the difference of the latter Greek hemistich, which does not at all correspond with the words of the former.—*Bp. Lowth.*

PSALM XV. Though this psalm is ascribed to David, when the ark was brought in triumph to the tabernacle prepared for it in Zion, yet the consolatory assurance, v. 5, that ‘He who doeth these things shall never be moved,’ may lead some to believe, that it was composed after the ten tribes were carried away by Shalmaneser, if not during the Babylonish captivity.

4. *Sweareth to his own hurt.*—The Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate, and Arabic, translate, ‘to his neighbour,’ reading לרעהו instead of להרע. The change is the more easy, as a ר begins the next word.—See *Merrick.*

Instead of any change, לרעהו, ‘to his neighbour,’ is the established reading of Arias Montanus, and the Polyglot. What Hebrew copy did our translators, and the anonymous critic in *Merrick*, use?

5. *Never be moved.*—Rather, ‘removed’ or expelled from his native land, which was considered by the Jews as the greatest calamity.

PSALM XVI. *Michtam.*—The Septuagint renders this word by Στηλογραφία, that is, ‘an inscription for a pillar, or monument,’ to indicate, that it deserved to be inscribed in more durable characters than usual. Houbigant translates it arcanum, ‘secret;’ from the Arabic verb, חתם, ‘to hide.’ It seems to mean, that those Psalms to which this word is prefixed, are especially remarkable, and worthy of everlasting remembrance; worthy to be written in golden letters, and set up, like the commandments, in some public place.

Though here we ought to add a caution, which equally belongs to every title, I mean, ‘maschils, ascents,’ &c. not to depend too much upon the placing of that title; it being very certain that many of the titles were either wrongly placed at first, or have suffered a confusion since; which observation will apply likewise to the authors and subjects, as they stand at present, prefixed to each psalm. This psalm, beside the admirable expressions of David’s faith and confidence in God, when, as it is supposed, he was violently persecuted by Saul,

contains a very remarkable prophecy concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, and particularly his resurrection from the dead.

D'Herbelot observes of the works of seven of the most excellent Arabian poets, that they were called *Al Modhahebat*, which signifies 'golden,' because they were written in letters of gold upon Egyptian paper. Might not the six psalms which are thus distinguished be so called, on account of their having been on some occasion or other written in letters of gold, and hung up in the sanctuary? Ainsworth supposes that *Mich-tam* signifies 'a golden jewel.' Such a title would have been agreeable to the eastern taste, as D'Herbelot has mentioned a book entitled 'Bracelets of gold.' Writing in letters of gold still continues in the East. Maillet, speaking of the royal Mohammedan library in Egypt, says, the greater part of these books were written in letters of gold, such as the Turks and Arabs, even of our time, make use of in the titles of their books. (Lett. xiii. p. 189.) The Persians are fond of elegant manuscripts, gilt and adorned with garlands of flowers.

2. *Thou hast said.*]—Sixteen copies, and all the ancient versions, except the Chaldee, read, 'I have said.' Bp. Lowth long since thought this the true reading. It is *אמרתִי* instead of *אמרה*. The only difference is in the addition of the *י*, which might have been easily omitted by a careless transcriber, or obliterated when written.

2. *My goodness extendeth not to thee.*]—Dr. Geddes, after Houbigant, reads, 'No good I expect but from thee.' Or, more literally, 'All my good is owing to thee.' So, also, equivalently, Street, on the authority of two manuscripts, which have *כל*, *all*, instead of *בל*, *not*. The difference to the eye, even in the printed copies, is sometimes scarcely perceptible.

3. 'As for the divinities which are on the earth, and the mighty ones, I have no delight in them.' Street, after Dr. Kennicott. So, also, Dr. Geddes.

4. *Drink-offerings.*]—Or, 'Their libations of blood,' &c.

5. *The Lord is, &c.*]—Rather, 'O Lord, the portion of mine inheritance,' &c.

5. *My lot.*]—This is the same as 'my heritage,' and alludes to the division that was made of the land of Canaan by lot. See Josh. xiv. 1, 2.

6. *The lines.*]—These were the boundary-lines, which separated the tribe of Judah from the rest. See them particularly described, Josh. xv, where they are called 'borders.'

7. *My reins.*]—This word is nearly equivalent to what we understand by 'the heart;' being considered not as the secret thoughts and inward reflections of the mind; but rather as the seat of the desires and affections.

8. *He is at my right hand.*—A metaphorical expression, signifying that God was his chief counsellor and guide. It appears that, in the ancient courts of judicature, the advocate, or defender, always stood on his client's right hand. Compare Ps. cix. 6.

9. *My glory.*—Five copies of Dr. Kennicott's collation have כְּבוֹדִי 'my liver,' instead of כְּבוֹדִי, 'my glory.' The ancient versions supply the copulative; and the true reading, perhaps, was וְכְבוֹדִי. My heart, my liver, and my flesh, are terms that are well suited; but 'my glory' seems to be out of place. The liver was considered by the ancient Hebrews as the seat of joy and grief; and it appears from Horace, that the Romans regarded it as the seat of jealousy, and the concupiscible passions. Lib. i. Od. xiii. 4; xxv. 15.—See *Parkhurst*.

This passage is quoted by St. Luke, Acts ii. 26, where it is, 'my tongue was glad,' which is a literal translation from the Septuagint ἡ γλῶσσά μου ἡγαλλίασατο.

10. *My soul.*—'My soul' may here mean 'my dead body.' See notes on 1 Pet. iii. 19. See, also, Taylor and Parkhurst on the Hebrew word נֶפֶשׁ. Virgil uses 'anima,' which generally means 'the soul,' in the same sense, Æn. iii. 67.

— — — Animamque sepulchro
Condimus.

'And we bury his body in the tomb.'

10. *Thine Holy One.*—One hundred and eighty copies of Dr. Kennicott's collation, and ninety-six manuscripts of De Rossi's have חֲסִידְךָ 'thine Holy One,' in the singular number, instead of חֲסִידֶיךָ 'thy saints,' in the plural. This correction of the printed text is supported by all the ancient versions in the Polyglots, and by the Targum. Instead of 'in hell,' we should read 'in the grave.' Here we have an express prediction uttered by the inspired Psalmist respecting the heavenly Messiah, and referred to as such by the venerable apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, Acts ii. 27, 31, xiii. 35, in that celebrated address, which the former delivered on the day of Pentecost, and which had such an effect on his hearers, that there were added unto the infant church, we read, about three thousand souls. See *Rosenmüller* on Acts ii. 25, and 27.

PSALM XVII. VER. 3, 4. *My mouth shall not transgress. Concerning the works of men, &c.*—Perhaps we should read, without the point, 'My mouth shall not transgress concerning the actions of men.' Compare Ps. xxxix. 1.—See *Merrick*.

4. *By the word of thy lips.*—That is, in consequence of the religious vows which I have formed.

8. *Thy wings.*—The tender assiduities of affection repre-

sented in this image are beautifully illustrated in the following epigram of Alpheus Mitylenæus, in the Greek Anthologia, lib. i. c. 87.

‘Behold the hen, that, white with falling snows,
Around her brood her fost’ring pinions throws,
And combats in their aid the wintry skies,
Till, pierc’d with cold, she droops the head, and dies.
Blush, Progne; blush, Medea; ’mid the dead
Though number’d, and with endless night o’erspread;
O! blush to see the simple bird impart
A lesson to the mother’s ruthless heart.’—*Merrick*.

The same image is found in Æschylus, (Eumen. v. 1004.) and in Euripides, (Hercul. Fur. v. 71.)

10. *In their own fat.*]—A strong metaphorical expression, denoting their pride, their voluptuousness, and insolence. The figure is derived from an over-fed animal. Thus we read, that ‘Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked,’ Deut. xxxii. 15. Houbigant conjectures that the original reading was חבלמו instead of חלבמו. If so, we should read, ‘They have thrown their net over me.’

11. *Compassed us in our steps.*]—Houbigant, on the authority of several manuscripts, reads, אשרוני, ‘They advance against me.’ The change consists only in the transposition of a *vau*, and the insertion of a ‘*yod*.’

11, 12. *They have set their eyes bowing down to the earth, &c.*]—Rather, ‘They fix their eyes on me, like a lion that watcheth for his prey, couching on the ground.’ By a slight transposition of the Hebrew words, Street has thus rendered the passage more intelligible.

13. *Disappoint him, cast him down.*]—The Septuagint reads *them*.

13, 14. *From the wicked, which is thy sword, &c.*]—Dr. Hammond translates it, ‘Deliver my soul from the wicked by thy sword, and by thy hand from the men of this age, who have,’ &c. So, also, equivalently, Houbigant, Bp. Lowth, and Bp. Hare.

14. *With thy hid treasure.*]—Rather, ‘with rare and costly dainties.’

15. *I will behold, &c.*]—The best interpreters agree, says Bp. Warburton, that these words signify David’s morning adoration before the ark, which was considered as the symbolic residence of the divine presence. See, also, Le Clerc. David seems in this verse to contrast the pure and sublime enjoyments of religious worship, with the gross and voluptuous pleasures of

the wicked in the preceding. By the phrase 'in righteousness,' we may either understand, in the consciousness of righteousness, or that righteousness was the implied condition on which he expected the return of God's mercy; for, to behold the face of God, is a figurative expression, denoting the enjoyment of his favor and protection.

PSALM XVIII. For an interpretation of this psalm, see 2 Sam. xxii; where it first occurs, and where the occasion that gave rise to it is stated. The reader, on comparing them, will find several variations in the two copies; but they are not of sufficient importance to be noticed here. Bp. Lowth considers the copy in the book of Psalms as the more correct upon the whole.

PSALM XIX. VER. 2. *Day unto day, &c.*]—The same beautiful prosopopœia occurs in Hesiod's Theogonia; where 'night' and 'day' are represented speaking to, or saluting each other, in their mutual approach. Vid. v. 748—757.—*Merrick*.

3. *There is no speech nor language, &c.*]—They cannot, indeed, use articulate sounds like man: nor do we hear them utter any words; but, though destitute of these, they are sufficiently understood by all nations; even the most barbarous, to whom the rays of human knowledge have never extended.—*Fawkes*.

4. *Their line.*]—The Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Arabic, read, 'Their sound is gone out,' and Dr. Kennicott has no doubt but this is the meaning of the Hebrew noun, קוֹל. Like *φθόγγος* in Greek, which is the word here used by the Septuagint, it signifies not only 'the sound,' but 'the string,' also, which produces it. See note on Rom. x. 18.

5. *As a bridegroom coming out of his chamber.*]—This is an allusion to the marriage-ceremonies of the Jews; one of which was, for the bridegroom to go out of his chamber at midnight, with many attendants, bearing lamps and torches. See our Saviour's parable of the ten virgins, Matt. xxv. 1.

8. *Pure.*]—Rather, 'clear.'

9. *The fear of the Lord is clean.*]—'The worship of Jehovah is pure.'—*Dr. Geddes*.

'The fear of God,' it has been remarked, often means the essential part of religious worship: but, restricted to its usual sense, it may here mean, that the fear of God is not contaminated with the foolish and superstitious terrors of idolatry; nor mixed with any thing pusillanimous and base.

10. *Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*]—There is no difference made among us, between the delicacy of honey in the comb, and after its separation from it. We may therefore be

at a loss to enter into the energy of this expression ; or, to express it with the same emphasis as our translation does the preceding clause, ‘ Sweeter than honey, yea, than the honeycomb,’ which last, it should seem, from the turn of thought of the Psalmist, is as much to be preferred to the honey, as the finest gold is to that of a more impure nature.

Whoever has eaten honey newly taken out of a honeycomb, or chewed the fresh honeycomb, before the cups or cells have been opened, must know that there is then felt a peculiar delicacy of flavor, which will be sought for in vain after the honey has been for any length of time expressed, or clarified.

But this will appear in a more striking light, if the diet and the relish of the present Moors of West Barbary, be thought to resemble those of the times of the Psalmist : for a paper published first in the Philosophical Transactions, and after that by Dr. Halley in the Miscellanea Curiosa, informs us, that they esteem honey a wholesome breakfast ; and the most delicious, that which is in the comb, with the young bees in it, before they come out of their cases, whilst they still look milk-white, and resemble (being taken out) gentles, such as fishers use. These I have often eaten, but they seemed insipid to my palate, and sometimes I found they gave me the heart-burn.—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 61.

13. *The great transgression.*—The definite article is here improperly added. The Hebrew is מִפְשַׁע רָב, that is, ‘ from great transgression.’

14. *Let the words of my mouth, &c.*—It is the supreme interest of every rational creature to do that which might be acceptable to the Almighty Father of his being. Our thoughts, words, and actions, should all be directed to this great end. If disorder prevail in one of these, indeed, it must generally produce irregularity and confusion in the others. If the imaginations of the heart be evil, our conversation will often be impure, and both will have an influence on our principles and conduct. Thus it is that the extravagances of fancy, and the irregular operation of our intellectual faculties, lead to evils of the most alarming nature, and the mind is sometimes betrayed into guilt, before we are even conscious of ignorance, or error. From a conviction of this, the psalmist, whose imagination was active, and whose affections were warm, could ask, ‘ Who can understand his errors?’ and, addressing himself to his Creator, said, ‘ Cleanse thou me from secret faults.’ In a prayer, therefore, presented at the throne of Grace, few petitions could have been more proper, and, at the same time, more devout than that which closes this beautiful little psalm. ‘ Let the words of my

mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.'

PSALM XX. VER. 5. *We will rejoice.*—Some read, 'That we may rejoice;' and others, in the present tense, 'we rejoice.' These first five verses were probably sung by a chorus, imploring success on the king's arms. David is supposed to reply, ver 6, declaring his trust in God, and his assurance of success. The chorus is then supposed to conclude the psalm.

9. *Save, Lord, &c.*—It should be, 'O Lord, save the king; hear us when we call.'

PSALM XXI. VER. 3. *A crown of pure gold on his head.*—See 2 Sam. xii. 30, to which, perhaps, this passage alludes.

9. *Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven.*—'Thou shalt place them in a furnace of fire, in the time of thy wrath.'—*Street.*

A furnace is the symbol of bondage and affliction. See note on Deut. iv. 20.

12. *Therefore shalt thou make them turn their back.*—Some critics have proposed construing שם, 'a butt, or mark to shoot at,' as the marginal reading: and, inserting חֵצִיךָ, 'thine arrows,' in the next line after בְּמִיתָרֶיךָ, they would render these two lines thus:

'For thou shalt make them a mark to shoot at;

Upon thy bow-strings thou shalt fix thine arrows against their faces.'—*Street.*

See, also, Merrick, and Dr. Geddes.

PSALM XXII, title. *Aijelet Shahr.*—Dr. Delaney conjectures that this and the 25th psalm were written by David when he was at Mahanaim, the place where God appeared to Israel in his distress, Gen. xxxii. 2. The 3d, 4th, and 5th verses, receive no small illustration and beauty, if supposed to be occasioned by the recollection of the former manifestation of Divine Providence on this very spot; the ideas which arose successively in the Psalmist's mind being the following: God had made good his promises to Israel; promises given in this very place, at a time when he was in grievous distress; and the worship of Israel still continued to be holy. Why then should not David hope he would make good his promises likewise to him; even though, to all appearance, he was on the brink of destruction? The Jews themselves, in Midrasch, apply this psalm as descriptive of the sufferings of the Messiah; and our Lord, in making use of the first words of it upon the cross, (when, as some think, he repeated the whole) not only laid claim to the character of the Messiah, but likewise tacitly insinuated, that his sufferings, instead of shocking their faith, should convince them, that he only could be the Messiah pre-

dicted by the prophet, because the indignities which he had foretold, notwithstanding they were so extraordinary, and told with so much minuteness, were all accomplished in him. Certainly, some passages in this psalm were not more literally fulfilled in our Saviour than they were in David. We shall therefore consider it as more particularly referring to Christ.

It is entitled *Aijelet Shabar*, which is commonly rendered, 'The Hind of the morning.' Many nice observations have been made on the titles of the Psalms, but they are attended with the greatest uncertainty. Later eastern customs, respecting the titles of books and poems, may, perhaps, give a little more certainty to these matters; but no great precision must be expected. D'Herbelot tells us, that a Persian metaphysical and mystic poem was called the 'Rose Bush;' a collection of moral essays, the 'Garden of Anemonies;' another eastern book, the 'Lion of the Forest;' that Scherfedden al Baussiri called a poem of his, written in praise of the Arabian prophet, who, he affirmed, had cured him of a paralytic disorder in his sleep, the 'Habit of a Derveesh;' and because he is there celebrated for having given sight to a blind person, this poem is also intitled by its author, the 'Bright Star.' Other titles mentioned by him are equally quaint and strange. The ancient Jewish taste may reasonably be supposed to have been of the same kind. This psalm, therefore, might in like manner be called, the 'Hind of the morning;' the fifty-sixth, (translating *Jonath-elem rechokim*) the 'Dove dumb in distant places;' the sixtieth, the 'Lily of the Testimony;' the eightieth, the 'Lilies of the Testimony;' in the plural; and the forty-fifth, simply the 'Lilies.'

It is sufficiently evident, I should think, that these terms do not denote certain musical instruments. For if they did, why do the more common names of the timbrel, the harp, the psalter, and the trumpet, with which psalms were sung, (Ps. lxxxi. 2, 3.) never appear in those titles?

Do they signify certain tunes? It ought not, however, to be imagined, that these tunes are so called from their bearing some resemblance to the noises made by the things mentioned in the titles; for lilies are *silent*, if this supposition should otherwise have been allowed, with respect to 'The Hind of the morning.' Nor does the fifty-sixth psalm speak of the mourning of the dove, but of its dumbness.

If they signify tunes at all, they must signify the tunes to which such songs, or hymns, were sung, and which were distinguished by these names; and so the enquiry will terminate in this point: whether the psalms to which such titles are affixed,

were called by these names; or whether they were some other psalms, or songs, to the tune of which they were to be sung.

And as we do not find 'The Bow' referred to, nor the same name twice made use of, so far as our lights reach, it seems most probable, that these are the names of those very psalms to which they are prefixed.

The forty-second psalm, it may be thought, might very well have been intitled the 'Hind of the Morning,' because, as that panted after the water-brooks, so panted the soul of the psalmist after God; but the twenty-second psalm, it is certain, might equally well be distinguished by this title, 'Dogs have compassed me,' 'The assembly of the wicked have inclosed me:' and as the psalmist in the forty-second psalm rather chose to compare himself to an hart than an hind, the twenty-second psalm much better answers this title, in which he speaks of his hunted soul in the feminine gender, 'Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling,' (which in the original is feminine) 'from the power of the dog.'

Every one that reflects on the circumstances of David, at the time to which the fifty-sixth psalm refers, and considers the Oriental taste, will not wonder to see that psalm intitled, the 'Dove dumb in distant places:' nor are lilies more improper to be made the title of other psalms, with proper distinctions, than a 'Garden of Anemonies,' to be made the name of a collection of moral discourses.—*Harmer*, vol. iii. p. 146.

3. *That inhabitest the praises of Israel.*—Dr. Geddes translates this verse, 'Yet thou art still the holy one, the subject of praise in Israel.' One manuscript written in the thirteenth century has *שֶׁדֶךְ*, 'sanctuary:' adopting this word, therefore, and changing the punctuation, Street reads, 'But, O thou, that inhabitest the sanctuary, the songs of Israel are, In thee our fathers trusted; they trusted, and thou didst alway deliver them,' &c.

12. *Many bulls have compassed me.*—By 'bulls,' in this verse, are designated men of the greatest violence, and of the most ungovernable passions.

From the 11th verse to the 19th, the sufferings of the holy Jesus are described in terms partly figurative, and partly literal. A lamb, in the midst of wild 'bulls and lions,' is a very lively representation of his meekness and innocence, and of the noise and fury of his implacable enemies. 'Bashan' was a fertile country, Numb. xxxii. 4, and the cattle fed there were fat and 'strong.' Deut. xxxii. 14. Like them, the Jews, in that good land, 'waxed fat and kicked,' grew proud and rebelled, 'forsook God that made them, and lightly esteemed the rock of their

salvation.' Let both communities and individuals, when blessed with peace, plenty, and prosperity in the world, take sometimes into consideration this flagrant instance of their being abused, with the final consequence of such abuse.—*Bp. Horne.*

14. *All my bones are out of joint.*]—The Arabic version reads, 'are dissolved.' The original may mean, that the bones were separated at the joints, which may well express the agonies and contortions of a sufferer on the cross. It is, however, more likely to be a metaphorical expression, denoting helplessness and great misery.

16. *For dogs have compassed me, &c.*]—Our Lord, who compared himself above, ver. 12, 13, to a lamb in the midst of bulls and lions, here sets himself forth again under the image of a hart, or hind, roused early in the morning of his mortal life, hunted and chased all the day, and in the evening pulled down to the ground, by those who 'compassed' and 'inclosed' him, thirsting and clamoring for his blood, crying, 'Away with him, away with him; crucify him, crucify him.' And the next step was, the 'piercing his hands and his feet,' by nailing them to the cross. How often, O thou preserver of men, in thy church, thy ministers, and thy word, art thou compassed, and thus pierced!—*Bp. Horne.*

The huntings of the Eastern people, according to Dr. Shaw, are managed by assembling great numbers of people, and inclosing the creatures they hunt.—*Travels*, p. 235.

17. *I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.*]—The skin and flesh were distended, by the posture of the body on the cross, so that the bones, as through a thin veil, became visible, and might be counted; (see *Le Clerc*) and the holy Jesus, forsook and stript, naked and bleeding, was a spectacle to heaven and earth.—*Bp. Horne.*

20. *My darling.*]—The Hebrew is יְהוּדָתִי. *Bp. Lowth* queries whether this relates to any thing more than נַפְשִׁי, 'my soul,' or 'my body,' in the former part of the verse; meaning the human nature united with the divinity in the person of Christ. The expression, 'from the power of the dog,' seems equivalent to, 'save me from destruction.' Compare *Ps.* xxxv. 17.

21. 'Save me from the mouth of the lion, and from the buffalo's horns defend me.'—*Street.*

The buffalo is said to be a fiercer animal than the common bull.

31. *Unto a people that shall be born.*]—The promised and expected race shall spring forth at the time appointed, and shall proclaim 'the righteousness which is of God,' by faith, to ages and generations yet unborn; who, hearing of that great

work, which the Lord shall have wrought for the salvation of men, will be led to glorify him in his church for the same to the end of time.

‘Rise, crown’d with light, imperial Salem, rise!
Exalt thy tow’ring head, and lift thy eyes!
See a long race thy spacious courts adorn;
See future sons, and daughters yet unborn,
In crowding ranks, on every side arise,
Demanding life, impatient for the skies!
See barb’rous nations at thy gates attend,
Walk in thy light, and in thy temple bend.’

POPE’S MESSIAH.

PSALM XXIII. VER. 2. *Still waters.*]—‘Waters inviting to rest.’—*Street.*

‘Still,’ compared with the furious torrent, that rushes from the mountains; so that the idea may be that of waters, which glide in silence, or gently murmur as they flow, like the streams of Siloam. See note on Ps. xlv. 4.

4. *Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.*]—‘Yea, though I should stray into the valley of the shadow of death;’ a valley overspread with the horrors of darkness and of death; being thick-shaded with trees, and infested with wild beasts. Dr. Delaney thinks this a noble reference to the dismal forests of Hareth. See Introduction to Ps. civ. ‘Surely,’ says he, ‘the valley of such a forest, with all its gloomy horrors, inhabited only by bears, and lions, and tigers, whose dens are in the deepest shades, is with infinite beauty styled ‘the valley of the shadow of death.’ ‘Thy rod,’ signifies, ‘thy protection, which will keep me, as the shepherd does his sheep, with a crook, from straying from thee:’ ‘Thy staff,’ signifies, thy defence, or thy sovereign power, which will guard me from all mine enemies, and support me under all afflictions.

The ‘valley of death’ may mean, a ‘deathful valley,’ where many might have been slaughtered by a victorious enemy, who had gained the advantage of higher ground, which, in those times, was of the utmost importance.

5. *Thou anointest my head with oil.*]—This is no reference to the ceremony of crowning kings, but to the eastern custom of anointing the heads of distinguished guests at feasts with oil and other fragrant unguents. The meaning is, thou suppliest me with all the comforts and enjoyments of life. It is a metonymy of the species for the genus. A similar practice prevailed, also, among the Greeks and Romans. Our Saviour

seems to have reproached the Pharisee, who had invited him to dine with him, for omitting this mark of hospitality, Luke vii. 46.

PSALM XXIV. VER. 2. *For.*]—The particle *וְ* is here rather intended to confine the reader's attention to the fact, than to be interpreted as a causal; and should either have been omitted, or rendered by 'namely,' or 'to wit.'

6. *The generation.*]—Rather, 'The race, or character,' &c.

7 to 10.]—The following account of a coronation, in Abyssinia, if it may be relied on, will serve to illustrate the latter part of this psalm:

'It was on the 18th of March (according to their account, the day of our Saviour's first coming to Jerusalem) that this festival began. The king's army consisted of thirty thousand men. All the great officers, all the officers of state, and the court, then present, were every one dressed in the richest and gayest manner, nor was the other sex behindhand in the splendor of their appearance. The king, dressed in crimson damask, with a great chain of gold round his neck, his head bare, mounted upon a horse richly caparisoned, advanced at the head of his nobility, passed the outer court, and came to the paved way before the church. Here he was met by a number of young girls, daughters of the *umbares*, or supreme judges, together with many noble virgins standing on the right and left of the court.'

'Two of the noblest of these held in their hands a crimson cord of silk, somewhat thicker than a common whip-cord, but of a looser texture, stretched across from one company to another, as if to shut up the road, by which the king was approaching the church. When this cord was prepared, and drawn tight, about breast-high, by the girls, the king entered, advancing at a moderate pace, curvetting, and shewing the management of his horse. He was stopped by the tension of this string, while the damsels on each side, asking—who he was? were answered, 'I am your king, the king of Ethiopia.' To which they replied, with one voice, 'You shall not pass, you are not our king.'

'The king retires some paces, and then presents himself as to pass, and the cord is again drawn across his way by the young women, so as to prevent him, and the question repeated; 'Who are you?' The king answered, 'I am your king, the king of Israel.' But the damsels resolved even on this second attack not to surrender, but upon their own terms; they again answer, 'You shall not pass, you are not our king.' The third time, after retiring, the king advances with a pace and air more de-

terminated ; and the cruel virgins, again presenting the cord, and asking who he is? he answers, ' I am your king, the king of Sion ;' and drawing his sword, he cuts the silken cord asunder. Immediately upon this, the young women cry, ' It is a truth : you are our king ; truly you are the king of Sion.' Upon which, they begin to sing Hallelujah, and in this they are joined by the court and army upon the plain ; fire-arms are discharged ; drums and trumpets sound ; and the king, amidst these acclamations and rejoicings, advances to the foot of the stair of the church, where he dismounts, and there sits down upon a stone, which, by its remains, apparently was an altar of Anubis, or the dog-star. At his feet, there is a large slab of free-stone, on which there is the inscription mentioned by Poncet.'

' The king is first anointed, then crowned, and is accompanied half up the steps by the singing priests, called ' dipteras,' chanting psalms and hymns. Here he stops at a hole, made for the purpose, in one of the steps, and is there fumigated with incense and myrrh, aloes, and cassia. Divine service is then celebrated ; and, after receiving the sacrament, he returns to the camp, where fourteen days should regularly be spent in feasting, and all manner of rejoicing, and military exercise.'

' After the king, comes ' the norbit,' or keeper of the book of the law in Axum (supposed to represent Azariah, the son of Zadoc) ; then the twelve ' umbares,' or supreme judges, who, with Azariah, accompanied Menilek, the son of Solomon, when he brought the book of the law from Jerusalem : and these are supposed to represent the twelve tribes. After these follow the ' abuna,' at the head of the priests, and the ' itcheque,' at the head of the monks ; then the court, who all pass through the aperture made by the division of the silk cord, which remains still upon the ground.'—*Bruce's Travels*, vol. ii. p. 278, 280.

The king then gives and receives presents, according to established custom and value, of which a list is kept, &c.

Nothing here needs be said on the adoption of Jewish manners, among the Abyssinians ; but it may be assumed that their history truly represents them, as, in some sense, a branch from the stem of Solomon ; and that they still retain the customs derived from him, by their connection with Judea.

Proceeding on this idea, we may conclude, that some such ceremony as is above described, was a part of the formalities in the ancient ceremony of inaugurating the kings of Judea. It is true, that the question is three times asked in Abyssinia, and but twice in Psalm xxiv ; but the allusion is the same, and to the same effect.

This extract seems to illustrate the general tenor of the 24th

Psalm; which might have served, at Jerusalem, as a kind of coronation anthem: or, at least, it might have been used in some part of such a solemnity. It begins with ascribing greatness to God, and proceeds to describe the man of his choice. What forbids our referring this description to the king, now 'ascending to the hill of the Lord, and to his holy place,' (as the king of Abyssinia to church) and regarded as a prince of rectitude, and a person of piety? May not this idea also ascertain the divisions of this psalm? as thus: verses 1 to 6, by the priests, &c. standing on the steps of the temple; then Selah, a change; v. 7.

Ver. 7. *The king's attendants.*—

Lift up your heads, O ye gates;
And be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors:
And the king of glory shall come in.

Ver. 8. *Virgins.*—Who is this king of glory?

King.—The Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory.

The king not assuming this title himself, but modestly and piously referring it to Jehovah. Or, is the eighth verse also a question, by the king's attendants? Certainly the same persons did not both ask the questions and give the answers. If the reader can better distribute the verses, he is at full liberty to use his judgment.—Fragments to Calmet, No. viii. See, also, Bp. Lowth, Lect. 27, Dr. Delaney, and Street.

PSALM XXV. In this psalm, the first letters of each strophe, or stanza, express the order of the alphabet. The stanzas are irregular; that is, they do not all consist of the same number of lines, and the same may be remarked in other alphabetical psalms. Some part of this irregularity may with justice be charged to the inaccuracy of the transcribers; but some part of it also might have existed in the original composition. It is extremely probable, that the practice of marking the stanzas by the letters of the alphabet, in regular succession, was not known in the time of David; and that this and other alphabetical psalms were composed during the captivity. Similar inventions, among the Greeks and other nations, are of modern date, and mark the decline of genius and taste.—See Bp. Lowth, Lect. iii.

14. *The secret of the Lord.*—Most of the ancient versions read, 'The Lord is the strength, or support, of them that fear him.'

20. *Let me not be ashamed.*—Rather, 'Let me not be confounded.'

22. *Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.*]—Mudge is of opinion, that this verse is to be considered as a detached sentence, shewing the author's zeal for his country; and that it was not an unusual close of these sacred hymns among the Jews.

PSALM XXVI. VER. 1. *Judge me.*]—Rather, as Dr. Waterland suggests, 'Plead for me, or give sentence in my favor.'

4. *Neither will I go in with dissemblers.*]—'Nor will I associate with hypocrites.' 'To go in,' naturally expresses the custom of visiting.

6. *I will wash mine hands in innocency.*]—It was a common custom among all the Jews to wash before prayers; but the priests, in particular, were not to perform any sacred office in the sanctuary till they had poured water out of the laver, and washed their hands in it. David alludes to this custom. But, because those outward ablutions might still leave impurities within, which all the water in the world could not wash away, he here declares that he would 'wash his hands in innocency itself,' which he elsewhere calls, 'the cleanness of his hands,' Ps. xviii. 24.—Dr. Dodd.

9. *Gather not.*]—Dr. Waterland would read, 'unite not.' It seems to be a metaphor derived from the mode of cutting corn, and of gathering in the harvest. See the parable of the wheat and tares, Matt. xiii. 24 to 30.

12. *My foot standeth in an even place.*]—He that stands on even ground is in no danger of falling or stumbling. By this metaphorical expression, David shews the rectitude and soundness of his principles, as well as the security of his present station.

PSALM XXVII. VER. 2. *To eat up my flesh.*]—That is, 'to destroy me.' The metaphor is taken from the ferociousness of wild beasts of prey.

3. *In this will I be confident.*]—That is, even in this most perilous state, I would not lose my confidence of the divine favor and protection.

5. *For in the time, &c.*]—This would have been better in the optative mood; 'That in the time of trouble He may hide me in his pavilion.' So, also, in the following clauses.

11. *In a plain path.*]—That is, in a right, or level path, and therefore secure. See Ps. xxvi. 12.

PSALM XXVIII. This psalm appears to have been sung by different persons. According to the division of Street, the first singer paused at the end of ver. 4. The second began at ver. 5, and ended with verse 8. The last verse, which is in the form of a general supplication, may be supposed to have been sung by both performers.

PSALM XXIX. This psalm contains a beautiful description of a thunder-storm in the East. Grotius is of opinion, that it was composed after the defeat of the Assyrians.

1. *O ye mighty.*]—After these words, the Septuagint adds, ‘young rams.’

2. *In the beauty of holiness.*]—Street renders it, ‘With holy reverence:’ and others, ‘With holy decorum.’ According to the idiom of the Hebrew language, it is well known, that when two substantives are found in this form of construction, the latter is frequently to be englished as a noun adjective.

5. *The cedars of Lebanon.*]—These noble trees, which are so often mentioned and alluded to in the holy Scriptures, grow among the snow, in the highest parts of the mountain, and are remarkable for their age and size. Maundrell informs us, that he measured one of the largest, and found it twelve yards six inches in girth, and yet sound. The extent of its branches was twenty-seven yards in diameter. Le Bruyn, also, having measured two of the most remarkable, found one of them fifty-seven spans in circumference, and the other forty-seven.

6. *Sirion.*]—The name of a mountain, on the east side of the Jordan, sometimes called also Hermon and Shenir, Deut. iii. 9.

9. *Maketh the hinds to calve.*]—The ancients were of opinion, that the fear of animals during a thunder-storm often caused abortion, or made them cast their young.—See *Plutarch*, Sympos. iv; and *Plin.* Nat. Hist. viii. 47.

But some commentators think, that we should read, ‘He bareth the oaks, or trees of the forest.’—See *Fenwick*.

Though the word אֵילָנָה does not appear in the Syriac Lexicons to signify an oak, says Le Clerc, yet it occurs four times in this sense in the Syriac version, exactly answering to the Hebrew word אֵלֶּה, 2 Sam. xviii. 9, 10, 14, as also in this place. The common translations suppose this passage to relate to the ‘hinds bringing forth young;’ which agrees but ill with the rest of the imagery, either in nature or dignity: nor are the reasonings of the learned Bochart satisfactory on the subject. Vid. *Hieroz.* part i. book iii. chap. 17. Whereas the oak struck with lightning admirably agrees with the context. And Bochart explains the word אֵילָנָה, (which has been absurdly understood by the Masoretes and other commentators as relating to a stag) as spoken of a tree, in a very beautiful explication of an obscure passage, Gen. xlix. 21.—*Bp. Lowth*, Lect. xxvii.

10. *The Lord sitteth upon the flood.*]—This denotes the un-

disturbed and undivided sovereignty of God over the waters of the ocean.

PSALM XXX. This is another psalm of the responsive kind, though the whole of it may be supposed to be sung by David, except the 4th and 5th verses, which are assigned by Street, to a chorus of attendants.

3. *From the grave.*]—The Bishops' Bible reads, 'from hell.' The expression is figurative, and signifies deliverance from danger and calamities; or an exaltation from misery to prosperity and happiness. See notes on Matt. xi. 23; Luke x. 18.

5. *For his anger endureth but a moment.*]—Street conjectures that we should read, by a slight transposition, גער, 'rebuke,' instead of גג, 'a moment.' The text will then be, 'Though he rebuke in his wrath, in his favor is life.' The Septuagint, Arabic, Vulgate, and Syriac, favor this reading.

7. *My mountain.*]—He alludes to mount Zion, upon which his kingdom seems so firmly fixed, as its basis, that there was no danger of its being subverted.

12. *My glory.*]—This should have been in the vocative case, 'O my glory.' Thou art mine honor, and the cause of my boasting. Thus, Horace to Mæcenas;

'O et præsidium, et dulce decus meum.'

We may read, therefore, 'To the end that I may sing praise to thee, O my glory, and not be silent.' But see the marginal reading.

PSALM XXXI. Bp. Patrick supposes this psalm to have been composed by David, soon after the difficulty to which he was reduced in the wilderness of Maon, when he fled from Keilah, and was so closely pursued by Saul, that, without the extraordinary protection of God, he would infallibly have fallen into his hands. But Mudge is of a different opinion: 'There are, says he, many strokes in this psalm, which point to the prophet Jeremiah for its author. The 13th verse begins with exactly the same words that are found Jer. xx. 10. The account of his enemies agrees well with the people of Anathoth, who had plotted to take away his life in a treacherous manner, by drawing him in to say things, on which they might ground a charge. The miraculous preservation, which he experienced at Jerusalem during the siege, ver. 19—21, where others suffered extremely, is another proof.'

8. *Into the hand.*]—Rather, 'in the hand,' which is here, and often in other texts, used for 'in the power.' See ver. 15.

8. *In a large room.*]—Rather, ‘in a wide space,’ where I have still power to move in different directions. The expression denotes a state of freedom.

9. *My belly.*]—Such is the meaning of the Hebrew word בֶּטֶן, but as, by synecdoche, that which forms a principal part is taken for the whole, we may read with Fenwick and Green, ‘my body;’ or take it literally, remembering that the Hebrew poets considered ‘the belly’ as the seat of sensibility, and equivalent to what we understand by ‘the heart.’

10. *Mine iniquity.*]—Many of the ancient versions read, ‘Because of my poverty, or helplessness.’ Instead of ‘strength,’ in this verse, we should now render it, perhaps, ‘fortitude.’

20. *In the secret of thy presence.*]—A metaphorical expression taken from the sanctuary, or holy of holies, in the tabernacle, which was considered most sacred and inviolable.

21. *In a strong city.*]—That is, a fortified city; or, as Street renders it, ‘in a besieged city.’ This line may probably allude to the siege of Keilah, which Saul had intended to form, in order to take David. See 1 Sam. xxiii. 8. Perhaps it should rather be rendered, ‘With regard to the besieged city,’ or ‘With regard to the fortified city.’ For when David consulted, whether the inhabitants of Keilah would betray him, God in his kindness foretold their intentions.—*Street.*

PSALM XXXII. Maschil. The Hebrew word מִשְׁכִּיל seems to be the hiphil participle from שָׁכַל, ‘to be wise.’ In an old Bible, printed A. D. 1549, (and which appears to be that pirated edition of Mathew’s Bible, described in page 110 of Lewis’s History of the English translation of the Bible) the title of this psalm is rendered thus: ‘An instruction of David.’ ‘A psalm of David giving instruction,’ is the marginal rendering at present; and the Septuagint, if ψαλμος, ‘Psalm,’ be supplied, is nearly the same.—*Street.*

3. *My bones waxed old.*]—That is, ‘My grief, when deprived of the power of expression, brought on my animal frame the effects of premature old age.’—See *Val. Flac.* lib. iv. v. 469, and *Hesiod.* v. 322, as quoted by Merrick. ‘My bones,’ by no unusual synecdoche, may mean ‘my body,’ or ‘my whole animal frame.’ See note on 1 Sam. xxxi. 13, and compare 2 Sam. xxi. 12—14.

6. *In the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.*]—That is, in times of the greatest calamities. This metaphor is very common in the Hebrew Scriptures, and not unusual with other writers.

7, 8. These verses may be rendered thus: ‘Do thou, being my hiding-place, preserve me from distress. O thou that art

the subject of my song, deliver me from them that surround me, saying, I will,' &c.

'O thou that art the subject of my song,' is the version of Street, on the authority of the Septuagint and Vulgate.

PSALM XXXIII. VER. 2. *The psaltery, and an instrument.*]—Rather, 'The psaltery, an instrument,' &c. Our translators introduced the copulative, *and*, improperly.

6. *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, &c.*]—Surely none can doubt the power of the Almighty, who surveys the heavenly bodies, marshalled under the canopy of heaven, like an army in the most beautiful order, and considers that all these glittering orbs were called into being by the breath of his mouth. This beautiful verse is a proof how thoroughly the royal poet entered into the majesty of the Mosaic narration: and the repetition of the sentiment, ver. 9, intimates how peculiarly he was charmed with that noble manner of describing the divine operations.—*Harvey.*

15. *He fashioneth their hearts alike.*]—The meaning is, that whatever variety of sentiment, or of disposition, may be found in the human heart, God is alike the author of all such as may, without ignorance and sin, be ascribed to Him.

20, 21, 22.]—These verses may be supposed to be sung in chorus, and the rest of the psalm by the principal vocal performer.

PSALM XXXIV. This is another psalm of the alphabetical class. The title informs us, that it was composed by David, when he was sent away from Abimelech on feigning himself mad. See 1 Sam. xxi. 12, 13. But the name there given to the king of Gath is Achish. Hence Dr. Kennicott conjectures, 'that Abimelech was the common title of the kings of Gath (as Pharaoh of Egypt), and that Achish was his particular name.' Perhaps that may be the case; or the word at present in the title, of this psalm, אֲבִימֶלֶךְ, 'Abimelech,' may be a corruption of אֲכִישׁ מֶלֶךְ, 'king Achish,' for the letters א and ב have often been mistaken for each other, and dropping a letter is a mistake that transcribers have frequently made.—See *Street.*

6. *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, &c.*]—Let all that are in trouble fix their eyes on God, and excite one another to a cheerful dependence on Him, saying, 'Behold the man, David, who was in a poor and mean condition, destitute of all human assistance; but by commending himself to his God by earnest prayer, the Lord delivered him out of all his distresses.' Dr. Delaney, however, is of opinion, that this and the next verse allude to Jacob, who, when at Mehanaim,

was placed by God under the protection of two hosts of angels.
—Life of David, b. iv. ch. 12.

PSALM XXXV. VER. 7. *For without cause.*]—Rather, ‘They have set their net for me without cause; without cause they have dug a pit for my soul.’ The pit, or pit-fall, was the common trap used in those days for catching the more powerful beasts.

7. *For without cause have they hid for me their net.*]—The causeless persecution raised against David by Saul, and against Christ by the Jews, reverted, through the righteous judgments of God, on the heads of their persecutors. The innocent birds escaped, and they who set the toils were themselves taken in them. Saul lost the kingdom which he thought to have secured, and his life also; and the Jews, who crucified Christ, lest the Romans should take away their place and nation, had their place and nation taken away by those Romans, for that very reason. In these histories, all impenitent persecutors of the faith, the church, and the servants of God, may read their doom.—*Bp. Horne.*

12. *To the spoiling of my soul.*]—‘And attempt to rob me of my life.’—*Green.*

The Hebrew is ‘abortion,’ or ‘bereavement to my soul.’ ‘That I may be bereft of my soul, as a woman of an abortive child.’—*Mudge, and Houbigant.*

13. *And my prayer returned into mine own bosom.*]—And my prayer rested, or settled, in my bosom, i. e. ‘I was never without a prayer for them in my breast;’ for it would be odd, says Mudge, to talk of prayers returning, without having mentioned any prayer at all. When the Orientalists pray seriously, in a state of grief, they hide their faces in their bosom; and to this custom the psalmist here alludes. The sister of St. Benedict is said, by Gregory, to have prayed, in this manner, for a storm to detain her brother.

14. *As one that mourneth for his mother.*]—Dr. Waterland thinks we should read, ‘as a mourning mother.’

15. *But in mine adversity they rejoiced, &c.*]—‘But in my halting they rejoiced, and gathered together; they gathered about me, crouching, when I did not know it; they rent me without ceasing.’

16. ‘Amidst profligate common buffoons, they grinned upon me with their teeth.’ These two verses express in the strongest images the insults of his enemies. When he halted, from weakness, they gathered about him, and mocked him with a mimic halting; for נָלִים properly signifies people weak in their legs,

and consequently limping and crouching: they would come behind him, and rend his garment; for קרע, perhaps, never signifies any thing else. They would gnash their teeth at him, amidst the loosest, most abandoned, profligate buffoons by profession; for there is not a worse word than חנפִי.—See *Mudge*.

The indignities and outrages which our blessed Saviour endured from the Jews, seem to be plainly foretold here. Compare Mark xiv. 65, where Jesus, being blindfolded, suffered a variety of indignities; but could not know who the wretched mockers and buffoons were, otherwise than by his own divine power.—*Dr. Dodd*.

17. *My darling.*]—The Hebrew is יְחִידָתִי, i. e. ‘My only one.’ As man has but one soul, or life, and one body, this expression may be used for either. The Chaldee paraphrast renders it ‘My body;’ the Syriac and Arabic, ‘My individual existence.’ See note on Ps. xxii. 20.

21. *Our eye hath seen it.*]—Rather, ‘Our eye hath seen what we wished.’

PSALM XXXVI. This psalm is supposed to have been written by David at the beginning of Saul’s persecution; whilst he outwardly professed kindness towards him, but yet could not help discovering that he desired and intended his ruin. David here opposes the goodness and faithfulness of God, to the malice and treachery of Saul, though without mentioning him by name: and, as Theodoret well observes, David’s delicacy in this respect is very remarkable; for although the chief of his most bitter complaints were levelled against Saul, yet throughout his psalms he never once mentions him by name.

This psalm, *Mudge* observes, has three states: the first, in which the author describes the treacherous and false contrivance of wicked men: the second is the address of the good man to God; in which he acknowledges all those attributes, which are the support of righteous men, to be infinite and boundless, and thence draws his assurance of being supported: the last, as the consequence of this, represents the downfall of the wicked.

1. By a slight alteration, which has been since confirmed by two manuscripts, Bp. Lowth proposed to read, ‘The sinner, with wickedness in his heart, hath said, There is no fear of God in mine eyes.’

2. *Until his iniquity be found to be hateful.*]—The Targum reads, ‘to hate instruction;’ so that we may suppose a word has been lost in the original text. The Syriac has, ‘Because

in his eyes it is hateful to forsake his sins, and feel disgust at them.' Admitting the original to be defective, Street renders this verse, 'While he flattereth himself in his crimes with inventing injustice, and with hating discipline.'

11. *Come against me.*]—That is, 'Approach, or come near me.'

12. *There are, &c.*]—Rather, 'Lo, see, behold, the workers of,' &c.

PSALM XXXVII. This is the third alphabetic psalm: but here each of the Hebrew letters includes two verses, or four hemistichs. Through the carelessness of transcribers, the order has been somewhat deranged.

3. *So shalt thou dwell, &c.*]—'Dwell in the land, and feed upon faith.'—*Waterland*.

Green rendered it, 'And be filled with its plenty.' The word *רעה* may also mean 'a pastor;' or one who feeds others.—See *Taylor*.

The Septuagint reads here, 'with its riches, or abundance.' So also Street. Others, 'So shalt thou dwell in the land and feed securely.'

5. *It.*]—That is, the object of thy trust and thy desire.

21. *The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again.*]—'A proverbial expression. The impious receive good things at the hand of providence, to which they have no claim, and are not careful to make a due return of obedience and devotion. They claim much from the mercy of God, without any care to pay the debt of gratitude for that mercy which they hope to find. Thus they are borrowers who never pay. Christ is a charitable man, who gives without any prospect of receiving again.' *Bp. Horsley*.

34. *When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.*]—The original will admit of this translation, 'Whilst thou shalt see the destruction of the wicked.'

PSALM XXXVIII, title, *A Psalm of David, &c.*]—'David's memorial psalm.'—*Dr. Waterland*.

Whether David really labored under any severe illness, which gave occasion to this psalm; or whether, under the representation of a sick man, he poetically describes his own distress; this psalm was composed by him, to put him in remembrance of that affliction, with which he confesses his sinfulness had provoked God to visit him. Theodoret, and many other commentators, think that David was not sick; but that in this psalm he called to remembrance the many disasters which befel him; as the murder of his son Amnon, the rebellion of Absalom, and other calamities mentioned in his history.

Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that this psalm, as well as the three next, was occasioned by a grievous distemper with which David was afflicted, and which he considered as the chastisement of God for his sins. That this calamity happened about the time when a dangerous and rebellious conspiracy was formed against him, appears from the same psalms; and as we hear of no more than one conspiracy of that kind, it follows, that his sickness happened about this time. By 'bringing to remembrance,' in the title, may be meant his praying to God to remember him, and deliver him out of his afflictions.—

Dr. Dodd.

This is called the third penitential psalm. It is certainly a most plaintive one, and must have been composed under some grievous affliction, which affected, perhaps, both his mind and body. See note on ver. 7.

4. *Are gone over mine head.*—Rather, 'hang over mine head.'

7. *My loins.*—The loins are considered by the Hebrew poets as the seat of the affections and desires; particularly of those which subsist between the sexes. On reading these and similar passages, says the learned and judicious Bp. Lowth, some, who were but little acquainted with the genius of the Hebrew poetry, have pretended to inquire into the nature of the disease with which the poet was affected; not less absurdly, in my opinion, than if they had perplexed themselves to discover in what river he was plunged, when he complains that 'the deep waters had gone over his soul.'

The soul being invisible, its distempers are so; therefore the sacred language describes them by the distempers of the body. A nation, or city, in a state of sin and impenitence, are represented as a body full of diseases and sores. In this style, the prophet Isaiah speaks of Judah and Jerusalem: 'The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head; i. e. from the lowest of the people up to their princes and rulers, 'there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores.'—See *Jones's Figurative Language of Scripture*, p. 56.

9. *Lord, all my desire is before thee.*—That is, 'All my desire, O Lord, is known to thee.'

11. *My sore.*—A strong metaphorical expression, signifying affliction, transgression, or guilt.

14. *No reproofs.*—'No disposition to retaliate wrongs, or to retort injuries.'

17. *For I am ready to halt.*—Rather, 'for I am ready to fall.'

19. *Are lively.*—By a slight alteration, first proposed by

Bp. Lowth, we may render this verse, 'But they that are mine enemies without a cause, are strong; and they that hate me wrongfully thrive.'

PSALM XXXIX, title. Jeduthun is mentioned as a singer, 1 Chron. xxv. 3.

There is good reason to believe, that David composed this psalm on the death of his beloved son Absalom, after Joab had so bitterly reproached him for the public expression of his grief; which made him begin the psalm, with a resolution to watch his words and passions more narrowly in future, and to stifle that grief, which his natural affection excited in the presence of the hard-hearted Joab, ver. 1, 2. His praying for a due preparation for his own death, ver. 4, refers to Absalom's untimely end. His blaming his own care to leave a large empire and great riches to his successor, evidently respects the loss of his designed heir, ver. 6. The reproach of the foolish, ver. 8, was the malicious use which Joab, and such as had no regard to God's wise dispensations, made of this affliction. The fading of beauty, when death comes, ver. 11, plainly refers to Absalom's beauty, in which he excelled all Israel. And lastly, the recovering of his strength, ver. 13, is not to be understood of his being restored from sickness; but relates to the recovering of the strength of his family, now much weakened by the loss of Amnon and Absalom, the two chief of his sons. Children are often called, in Scripture language, 'the strength' of their parents. Compare Gen. xlix. 3; Ps. lxxviii. 51.

4. *Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days.*—Some have thought that David here prays for a special revelation from God of the time of his death, taken either precisely, or with some latitude; how long he should live, when he should die, and be called out of this world. This, indeed, is a favor, which it hath pleased God to grant unto some men. Thus Moses, some time before his death, had notice given him of it, Deut. xxxii. 49, 50; but the prescience, or foreknowledge of the day, or time of our death, is a thing, for the most part, unfit for us to ask of God, or for him to grant. This, therefore, is not the thing that David prays for; but he prays that God would make him know, in general, how short and uncertain man's life here on earth is;—that every man must certainly die after a determinate and short number of years are expired: being, in the mean time, uncertain and ignorant of that fatal period. In Scripture, words of knowledge imply suitable affections; for a man therefore 'to know his end and the measure of his days,' or to know how short and uncertain his life is on earth, is for him seriously to consider and lay to

heart that great truth, and live accordingly. This is not what every man does, though every man ought to do it. David, therefore, here prays for the very same thing that Moses does, Ps. xc. 12, 'So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom;' that is 'Enable us, by thy grace, to make a just account of the shortness and uncertainty of our life on earth, so that we may wisely apply ourselves to make the best use we can of it in repenting of our sins.' *Bp. Bull.*

6. *They are disquieted.*]—That is, men in general. These sudden changes from one person to another are so common in Hebrew poetry, that there is reason to think it was esteemed a beauty.

11. *Like a moth.*]—The Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the Arabic read, 'like a spider,' which, during the season when there are no flies, becomes remarkably torpid and thin. But considering the Hebrew text as correct, and understanding the inspired writer as intending to say, that the beauty of man, in the progressive stages of his existence, consumes away like the beauty of a moth, which continues but a very short time, the simile is beautiful and just.

PSALM XL. It seems, that we have here two psalms, which have been made into one. In Dr. Kennicott's Bible, this psalm is divided into three parts; the first ending with the sixth verse, the second with the first word of the twelfth verse, and the third reaching to the end of the psalm.

That the psalms are not properly divided from each other, in some places, is universally allowed, (see Merrick's note on the forty-second and forty-third psalms;) and their being divided very differently in the ancient versions, shews that there has been always a difference of opinion on this subject.

The first part of this psalm, to the end of the eleventh verse, is evidently a thanksgiving. The rest of it, which should be called the forty-first psalm, is a supplication, or prayer. It may farther be worthy of observation, that this latter part, from the fourteenth verse, tallies almost exactly with the seventieth psalm from the second verse. So that, if the last part of this psalm, from the beginning of the twelfth verse, were reckoned the forty-first psalm, it would be a prayer very much resembling the seventieth psalm, and might quite as well be accounted an entire psalm as that is.—*Street.*

Though this psalm, in its primary sense, may be applicable to the sickness, with which God had afflicted David, and the distress to which he was reduced by his enemies, (see the two foregoing psalms) in devout thankfulness for deliverance from both of which, he may here be supposed to declare his resolution to

serve God cheerfully and faithfully; yet some passages in it may be much better applied to Christ's readiness to do the will of God. Certain it is, that part of the psalm was at least prophetic, and relates to our Saviour, to whom it is applied by the apostle, Heb. x. 5, 6, 8, 9. For this reason, it is appointed by our church for the service of Good-Friday.—*Dr. Dodd.*

5. *Many, &c.*]—'Many things hast thou done, O Lord my God: thy wonders and thy thoughts towards us, I am not able to set in order before thee.'—*Dr. Waterland.*

6. *Mine ears hast thou opened.*]—In the Hebrew, it is, 'Mine ears hast thou bored.' It must be remembered, that, in order to preserve an equality among the Israelites, God required that, if any of them had sold their liberty, they should be restored to it at the jubilee. But it was lawful to continue those in slavery, who were willing to continue so; and, in that case, their ears were bored in testimony of it. Probably, David alludes to this, when he makes the Son of God say to his Father, 'that he had bored his ears;' i. e. that he had accepted him to be his voluntary servant: and St. Paul, (Heb. x. 5) agreeably to this interpretation, renders it, 'But a body hast thou prepared me;' i. e. to be a victim, to be offered up in sacrifice to thee. Others think that the same reading might be made out by the slight alteration proposed by Mr. Pierce, (see Bp. Lowth's Comment in Merrick's notes) who reads *אני גוה* 'a body,' instead of *אני*, 'ears,' which reconciles it with the passage in the Epistle to the Hebrews, ch. x. 5.

7. *Then said I, Lo, I come, &c.*]—Behold, I come to make an offering of myself unto thee, as the great Messiah will hereafter do, even of his very blood; for so the book of the law requires, wherein this great sacrifice of Christ is more plainly described.—*Bp. Patrick.*

7. *In the volume of the book it is written of me.*]—The Septuagint renders it, in the head (*κεφαλῆς*) of the book. Chrysostom has described this 'cephalis' as a wrapper, by *εἰλημα*: and supposed, that on this eilema was written a word, or words, which imported, 'about the coming of the Messiah.' Aquila uses the word eilema, to express what we render volume, (*מגלת*, Megelet.) Harmer says, vol. iii. p. 144, the thought is not only clear and distinct, but very energetic, amounting to this; that the sum and substance of the sacred book is, THE MESSIAH COMETH: and that these words accordingly might be written, or embroidered, with great propriety, on the wrapper, or case.

Now, admitting Harmer's conclusion to be just, there are better premises for it than he had collected, namely, that the head, cephalis, capitulum, label, or ticket, appended to the volume,

or roll, was thus inscribed; and in this view, the capitulum answered the purpose of lettering on the backs of our books. The passage, then, may be thus rendered: 'Burnt-offerings and sacrifice were not what thou didst require, they were not according to thy will. Then said I, Lo, I come, as, in the roll of the book,' (במגלת, Be Megelet) or, as the Keri (גלל, Gelel) the doubly-rolled roll; i. e. the little roll upon the greater roll, 'is written concerning me: I delight to accomplish thy will.' In other words, 'Thou didst not desire a treatise on sacrifice, or burnt-offering; but one relating to me; to the person who proposes his obedience, as an active fulfilment of what is wanted: whereas sacrifices possess no active obedience; they are only passive, and therefore inadequate to the real fulfilment of thy requisitions.'

12. *Mine iniquities.*]—Rather, 'my calamities,' or 'afflictions.'

PSALM XLI. ver. 3. *Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.*]—One manuscript has על, upon, instead of כל, all. If this be considered as the true reading, the verse may be rendered, 'The Lord supporteth him on the bed of languishing, on his restless bed, in the hour of sickness.' Street refers to a beautiful passage in Homer, Il. xxiv. l. 3—11, as an illustration of this text.

6. *And if he come to see me.*]—Rather, 'If any one come to me,' &c. The third person is frequently thus, indefinitely, understood in Hebrew.

8. *An evil disease.*]—A metaphorical expression, perhaps, denoting foul transgression (see note on Ps. xxxviii. 7.), and alluding to his guilt in the affair of Bath-sheba and Uriah.

9. *Hath lifted up his heel against me.*]—Mudge considers this as a metaphorical expression denoting treachery. The pampered horse, that kicks the master who feeds him, affords a striking image both of insolence, treachery, and ingratitude.

PSALM XLII. See title to Psalm xxxii.

'I cannot help esteeming this psalm,' says Bp. Lowth, 'one of the most beautiful specimens of the Hebrew elegy. The author of this elegant complaint, exiled from the temple, and from the public exercise of religion, to the extreme parts of Judea, persecuted by his numerous enemies, and agitated by their reproaches, pours forth his soul to God in this tender and pathetic composition. The ardent feelings of a devout heart are admirably expressed, while the memory of former felicity seems to aggravate his present sufferings. The extreme anxiety of a mind, depressed by the burthen of sorrow, and yet at the same time impatient under it; overcome by an accumulation of

evils, yet in some degree endeavouring to resist them, and admitting, through the dark cloud of affliction, a glimmering ray of hope and consolation, is finely depicted. In frequent and almost instantaneous transitions, he glows with love, and droops with lamentation; he complains, he expostulates, he despairs, and yet hopes; he is afflicted, and is again consoled.

These two psalms ought to make but one. Eusebius was of the same opinion; and Dr. Kennicott says, that one of the Bodleian MSS. confirms this conjecture.

7. *At the noise of thy water-spouts.*]—We learn from Dr. Shaw, p. 333, that water-spouts are more frequent near the capes of Latikea, Greego, and Carmel, than in any other part of the Mediterranean. These are all places on the coast of Syria, and the last of them (every body knows) is in Judea, it being a place rendered famous by the prayers of the prophet Elijah. The Jews then could not be ignorant of what frequently happened on their coasts; and David must have known of these dangers of the sea, if he had not actually seen some of them, as Dr. Shaw did.

The metaphors, in this verse, are meant to express overwhelming sorrow. See note on 2 Sam. xxii. 5.

8. *And in the night, &c.*]—By a small conjectural emendation, we may read, ‘And by night I sing praises to the living God.’

10. *A sword in my bones.*]—In the language of Scripture, life is attributed to the bones. See, also, Homer, Il. xii. v. 386. The expression of the psalmist, therefore, is equivalent to, ‘in my heart.’ Dr. Kennicott, after the Septuagint and Arabic, reads, ‘While they are breaking my bones.’

PSALM XLIII. More than thirty manuscripts confirm the opinion of Bp. Lowth, (Prælect. p. 229) that this and the preceding are one psalm. The similarity of the composition in each, and the return of the same burden in both, are proofs that this opinion is well-founded.—*Street.*

PSALM XLIV. This psalm appears to have been composed at a time when the Jewish people suffered greatly from their enemies, and when many were carried into captivity; though the state itself subsisted, and the public worship of God was maintained. The author, by the singular number, which occurs every now and then, must have been of eminence. It could not sound well out of any mouth but that of the prince himself; therefore either the prince, or some one in his person, must have been the writer: not unlikely, as Bp. Patrick thinks, Hezekiah; and, perhaps, from ver. 15, 16, it was

written soon after the blasphemous message of Rabshakeh.—*Mudge.*

Calvin supposes that this psalm was written so late as during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. See also title to Psalm xxxii.

2. *And cast them out.*—The meaning of the Hebrew verb here rendered, ‘cast them out,’ is generally applied to the germination of plants, or to the shooting out of branches; and in Ezekiel, (ch. xliv. 20,) it signifies, when applied to hair, ‘to suffer it to grow.’ Houbigant, therefore, and others read, ‘Thou didst afflict the people, and sufferedst them,’ (i. e. our forefathers) ‘to shoot forth, or increase.’

11. *Like sheep.*—There is great force in this similitude. Sheep were slaughtered in greater numbers than any other animal, both for sacrifice and for food. No creature is more timid, none more exposed to the attacks of ferocious beasts of prey, and none suffers death so quietly and without complaint. See ver. 22, and compare 2 Chron. vii. 5.

12. *Dost not increase thy wealth by their price.*—The Arabic reads, ‘And diminishest the multitude of their number.’ Some commentators think, that this is an allusion to the sale of slaves, who were put up to auction, but were never sold, except some one offered an advanced price.

16. *For the voice, &c.*—That is, ‘because of, or on account of the voice,’ &c.

19. *In the place of dragons.*—‘Dragons’ is a term that conveys no particular idea; because there are no creatures properly so called. The original word here used means those noxious and disagreeable animals, which generally hide themselves in dark, inaccessible coverts.—*Pilkington.*

Instead of ‘dragons,’ the Septuagint reads κακοσεως, i. e. ‘of evil.’

20. *If we have forgotten the name, &c.*—Forgetting the name of God, means falling into idolatry.—*Dr. Clarke.*

25. *Our belly cleaveth unto the earth.*—A strong metaphorical expression, denoting misery and degradation. It is evidently derived from the manner in which the whole serpent species, and other reptiles, crawl on the earth. See note on Gen. iii. 14.

PSALM XLV. This psalm is evidently an epithalamium, or marriage-song; and seems to have been composed by some courtly bard, when Solomon took to his bed a daughter of the king of Egypt, as his principal sultana. The title is singular. Some will not allow that the author had any respect to Solomon, in this psalm, but to Christ only. This is certain, that many of the expressions in it are so magnificent, that they can only

be applied, in a very mean sense, to Solomon and his bride, and some of them scarcely at all. But, on the other hand, many of the passages so plainly allude to that prince, that they can only be allegorically applied to our blessed Saviour. The principal parts of it, however, relate to Christ; it being sufficiently evident, that the prophet, while he was writing some part of this psalm, was carried quite beyond king Solomon, to the great King, 'The Lord our righteousness.' So that we may say, as our Saviour did, on another occasion, 'Behold, a greater than Solomon is here.' This is even acknowledged by the best of the Jewish interpreters themselves.—*Bp. Patrick*. See, also, *Bp. Horsley*, Sermon. iv. p. 64.

Title. The Hebrew word לַמְנִצֵּחַ, 'To the chief musician,' or 'To him that giveth victory,' is omitted in three manuscripts, and probably ought not to be inserted here; for the title seems to be perfect without it.

The word *Shoshannim* is of various signification, but its etymology is certain: for, as Kimchi observes, it is derived from another Hebrew word, which signifies 'six.' It is equally applicable, therefore, to musical instruments of the hexachord kind, and to lilies; because the former have six strings, and the corolla of the lily has six leaves.—*Leigh's Critica Sacra*.

1. *My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.*—With this rendering the versions in the Polyglot agree. But I must own, says Street, I do not see how 'the tongue' can be called 'a pen.' If, as the Targum explains it, the line contains a simile between the tongue and a pen, it is not an adequate one; for speech uttered by the tongue is more swift than the pen of the readiest writer.

Perhaps עֲטָה may be the imperative mood of the verb עָטָה, 'to hasten.' One manuscript of great antiquity, and four other copies, have סָפַר instead of סֹפֵר; and סָפַר signifies 'to relate, to rehearse.' See Gen. xxiv. 66. Instead of מְהִיר, one copy has מְהֵר, from the verb מָהַר 'to hasten.' We may read, therefore, 'My tongue, move swiftly, hastening to repeat.'

The line thus construed, as Street observes, expresses the fire and impetuosity of the poet, whose tongue could hardly utter words fast enough to keep pace with the rapid flow of his ideas; and it is perfectly parallel to that with which the ode commences.

2. *Grace is poured into thy lips.*—Dr. Geddes reads, 'grace is diffused on thy lips;' and Street, 'grace is poured out from thy lips.' The various significations of the prefix ל will admit of either interpretation.

3. *Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, &c.*—

Array thyself in thy royal ornaments, and the ensigns of thy power, O thou most mighty prince, and appear in such splendor and majesty, as may serve for an emblem of that sovereign authority, in which the omnipotent Lord of the universe shall shew himself among men. 'Sword' here signifies either 'glory,' or 'the word of God.' See Ephes. vi. 17.—*Fawkes*.

4. *Because of truth, &c.*]—Rather, 'In the cause of truth,' &c.

4. *Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.*]—If the present reading be right, the sense, perhaps, is this: 'Thy right hand, by its promptness to encounter danger, shall bring thee acquainted with terrible things.' Or, thy right hand shall know its office by habitual exercise; it shall render thee expert in war, and lead thee on from conquest to conquest.—*Merrick*.

Some, however, read, 'Let thy right hand dart terrors;' and Street, equivalently, 'Thy right hand shall shower down terror.' The Hebrew radical will admit of different interpretations.

5. *Thine arrows are sharp.*]—The Chaldee Targum has here, preserved three words, which are necessary to the sense: *ובני קשתך ישתלחון*, 'and the sons of thy bow shall be shot.' In Job, xli. 28, an arrow is called *בן קשת*, 'the son of the bow.' This metonymy is very common with the Asiatic poets. Wine is called 'the mother of sins,' or 'the son of grapes;' water, 'the daughter of the clouds,' &c.—*Sir W. Jones's Works*, vol. vi. p. 121.

8. *Of myrrh, &c.*]—Perhaps these were the drugs, from which the oil for anointing the kings of Israel and Judah was prepared. Two of them, the myrrh and the cassia, are the same with those from which the oil for the consecration of Aaron and his sons was commanded to be made. See Exodus xxx. 23, 24.—*Street*.

8. *Aloes.*]—What is here meant by Aloes is not the herb of that name, which is bitter and of a bad smell, but the 'wood of aloes,' which, when dried, gives a very agreeable odor. Cassiodorus says, in his time, it was burnt before the altars instead of frankincense.—*Vid. Celsii Hierobot.* vol. i. p. 135—171.

8. *Out of the ivory palaces.*]—Instead of 'palaces,' we should read 'chests,' richly adorned with ivory, perhaps, and which contained the garments; or else, we may understand that small cabinets are meant, in which unguents and perfumes were kept. It has been remarked, that the same word, which in Greek signifies 'a house,' is used in Hesiod, (*Op. et Di.* ver. 96,) for 'a box;' and in some of the eastern languages a house, a vase, a wardrobe, and a trunk, are expressed by the same word. See a very learned note on this subject in *Merrick*, p. 95. Though

it is probable, from some passages in the Greek and Roman classics, as well as from other texts of Scripture, (see Is. liv. 12) that ivory ornaments only are meant, such as beadings, mouldings, &c. Compare Odyss. lib. iv. 72; Hor. Od. lib. ii. 18. 1; and Athenæi Deipnos. lib. ii. as quoted by Rosenmüller.

8. *Whereby they have made thee glad.*—Street adds this clause to the next verse, and connects it with kings' daughters, thus: 'The daughters of kings make thee rejoice amid thy costly pomp.'

9. *Kings' daughters were among thy honourable women; upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir.*—It was the custom anciently in the east, and it is still among the Turkish princes, to have one among their many wives superior to all the rest in dignity. Lady M. W. Montagu (vol. ii. p. 156) learnt from the Sultana Hafetan, the favorite of the late emperor Mustapha, that the first those princes made choice of was always after the first in rank; and not the mother of the eldest son, as some writers would make us believe. See also 2 Chron. xi. 21, 22; and xv. 16.

11. *For he is thy Lord; and worship thou him.*—This is very improperly rendered in our liturgy, 'He is thy Lord God,' &c. The word translated Lord, is not יהוה, 'Jehovah,' but אדניך, which means 'Thy master, thy prince, or lord.' 'To worship,' in the time of our translators, meant to respect and honor. A justice of the peace is still addressed as 'your worship.' Our city-corporations are styled 'worshipful;' and the word is used in the same sense as it is here by David, in our Office of Matrimony—'With my body I thee worship.'

13. *The king's daughter is all glorious within.*—Some commentators think that this refers to the endowments of her mind; and others to the splendid manner in which her interior apartments were fitted up.

16. *Instead of thy fathers, &c.*—That is, 'the place of thy fathers shall be supplied by thy children,' &c. Or, rather, instead of boasting of thy ancestors, as the Jews are apt to do, thou shalt have children, who shall far surpass them all in glory. The sentiment is, beside alluding to the Messiah, that it is more honorable to be the founder of a family, and to transmit a name to posterity, than to be one in the long list of a pedigree, and to receive it from genealogical descent.

17. *I will make.*—The Septuagint reads, 'They shall make,' meaning 'thy children.'

PSALM XLVI. This ode appears to be a thanksgiving for some victory, or deliverance. The expression על עלמות has by some been understood to specify the musical instrument,

which was used to accompany the singing of it. But the word *עלמות* signifies a virgin, or maiden, and *עלמות* is the plural of it, as may be seen, Cant. i. 3; and the preposition *על* signifies, in some places, according to Noldius, 'with,' 'together with.' See Eccles. xii. 14; 1 Sam. xiv. 32; and title to Ps. ix. That the women joined in concert with the men, or else sang in answer to them, in celebrating the victories, or the deliverances of the Jewish nation, may be seen by the song of Miriam and the women at the Red Sea. (Exod. xv. 20.) In the apochryphal book of Judith, the same custom is largely described, ch. xv. 12, 13. The right title, therefore, of this psalm is probably, 'To him that giveth victory. An ode, by the sons of Korah, together with the virgins.'—*Street*.

4. *There is a river, the streams whereof, &c.*—Piscator, Hammond, and others, understand this of the waters of Siloam, whose stream ran near Jerusalem, and was beneficial and pleasant to its inhabitants. The peaceful brook is opposed to the roaring and tempestuous ocean; the one is an emblem of the small force that defended Jerusalem, the other indicates the tumultuous and numerous troops that attacked it. Thus, in Isaiah, 'the waters of Siloam that flow gently,' are opposed to 'the waters of the river strong and mighty, even the king of Assyria and all his force.'—See *Bp. Lowth's* Isaiah, viii. 6; and the learned prelate's note.

6. *The earth melted.*—That is, 'The earth was struck with terror.' In Hebrew poetry, the effect of fear is described by the significant metaphor of melting. In modern language we say, to melt with grief, with tenderness, &c. See note on Jos. v. 1; and Prov. xv. 10.

10. *Be still.*—We must here supply, 'he says,' 'saying,' or something equivalent, to connect the sense. This psalm is of the responsive kind, and was all sung, we may suppose, by the sons of Korah, except verse 8 and verse 11, which Street allots to the virgins.

PSALM XLVII. VER. 5. *God is gone up with a shout.*—Rather, 'God is to be extolled with shouts.'

7. *Praises with understanding.*—Some commentators are of opinion, that we should translate 'with skill,' and make the Hebrew word relate to the excellency of the musical performers. Street has, 'Sing ye an exquisite song of praise.'

9. *The princes of the people.*—That is, 'The heads of the tribes; or principal persons.'

9. *Are gathered together.*—That is, they are assembled at this solemn festival, 'to sing praises to God,' without any fear of being attacked by the surrounding nations; God having

undertaken to protect them, while they left their houses unguarded to attend his service.

9. *The shields of the earth.*]—That is, ‘The protection of the earth,’ meaning that the land of Judea belonged to God. By a common figure of rhetoric, the effect is here expressed by the instrument, or cause of it. We may read ‘Because the protection of the earth belongs to God, He is greatly exalted.’

PSALM XLVIII. VER. 2. *On the sides of the north, &c.*]—That is, on the north side, lies the city of the great King; meaning the city of Jerusalem. See this verse in our liturgy. It may be asked, why this circumstance is noticed as an encomium on the hill of Zion, that Jerusalem lay on the north of it? The answer is, that it is mentioned as a proof of its greater security; for the hill of Zion was almost inaccessible on any other side, except that towards the north; and here it was defended by Jerusalem, which was exceedingly strong: but though the psalmist mentions this as a material circumstance, he shews that it was not in the strength of it that he confided, but in the presence and protection of God; ‘God is known in her palaces for a refuge,’ ver. 3.—*Dr. Dodd.*

4. *The kings were assembled.*]—Either those kings, who entered into a confederacy with Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xx; or those Assyrian princes, who were ostensibly called princes, Is. x. 8, 9.

4. *They passed by together.*]—This may refer, either to their marching towards Jerusalem with an intention to attack it; or to their going away without being able to accomplish the object which they so confidently expected.

7. *With an east wind.*]—Green reads, ‘Like the east wind,’ and Street connects the 6th and 7th verses together thus: ‘Trembling seized them there, and pain like that of a woman in travail, as suddenly as the east wind wrecketh the ships of Tarshish.’

10. *According to thy name.*]—In other words, ‘Like as thy name.’

11. *The daughters of Judah.*]—By this expression we are to understand the inferior cities, towns, and villages, of Judah. These are called ‘daughters,’ with relation to Jerusalem, the metropolis, or mother-city.

PSALM XLIX. This very difficult psalm has much employed the learned. The object of it seems to be, to expose the folly of those, who place a confidence in their power and wealth, when, after all, neither of these can ransom their souls from death, nor their bodies from the tomb; while the author professes himself to believe, that God will redeem his soul from the

power of the grave, and receive him. It concludes with an exhortation to others not to be alarmed at the increasing wealth of any one; for that it shall be of no use to its possessor in his latter end, but that he shall perish notwithstanding his riches.—*Street*.

With respect to the author, the time, and the occasion of this most excellent hymn, we know nothing for certain.—*Rosenmüller*.

4. *Dark saying.*]—This applies to the particular subject discussed in this psalm; a subject which has always been considered as attended with much difficulty; and, before ‘life and immortality were brought to light by the gospel,’ could scarcely be comprehended, or understood.—See *Poole*.

5. *Of my heels.*]—The Syriac and Arabic versions, instead of ‘my heels,’ render it ‘mine enemies;’ and the Hebrew verb עקב, as Michaelis observes, means, to ‘supplant, circumvent, or defraud:’ we may therefore render, with Bp. Hare, Merrick, and others, ‘When the wickedness of the fraudulent, or of those that lie in wait for me, surrounds me.’—See also *Bp. Lowth*.

6. *They that trust in their wealth.*]—We may put this in apposition ‘with the fraudulent,’ in the last verse, and read, in a connected manner, ‘of those who trust in their wealth,’ &c.

7. *His brother.*]—‘Brother’ is here taken in the enlarged sense of ‘a fellow-creature:’ the pronominal *his*, should have been omitted, and we might read ‘a brother,’ or ‘another person.’ It is evident, that redemption from death is here meant. See verses 9 and 10.

8. *Their soul is precious.*]—By ‘the soul,’ we must here understand ‘life;’ and the Hebrew word rendered ‘precious,’ יקר, sometimes means that which is rare; or that which seldom happens. The psalmist therefore means, perhaps, to say, that anciently the lives of a few individuals were ransomed from death by the miraculous interposition of God; but that now such redemption has ceased for ever. Or, we may read the context in connexion thus: ‘No man can redeem from death his brother, nor give for him to God a ransom, or a redemption-price for his life, so that he may be spared for ever, and live to eternity, and never see the pit.’ Dr. Waterland, Houbigant, and Mudge, all render this verse differently.

10. *For he seeth.*]—This should have been rendered in the impersonal form, ‘for it is seen,’ or ‘it is evident.’

13. *Their sayings.*]—Rather, ‘their maxims,’ or the principles that regulate their sentiments and conduct.

14. *Like sheep.*]—The copy from which the Syriac version was made, says *Street*, seems to have had ܡܝܬܝܢ, ‘like sheep,’

before סלה, instead of after it. The simile will in this case apply to their posterity in the last verse, who are said to approve the sayings, or maxims of their fathers, from mere imitation, as sheep follow one another. The next words, 'they are laid in the grave,' will then begin a fresh sentence.

14. *Death shall feed on them.*]—These words contain the same imagery, or beautiful description of death, that we find in the old Scholiast on Statius, who says that Cerberus, according to the fable, feeds on dead bodies. The same idea may be discovered in Sophocles, and other Greek poets. The Septuagint reads, 'Death shall feed them as a shepherd.' The same thought may be traced in the Roman classics. See Stat. Theb. iv. 528; Virg. Æn. vi. 545; and Hor. Od. lib. i. 25. v. 16. Bp. Lowth proposes some emendations, and renders the whole verse thus:

'They lie in the grave like sheep:
Death shall be their shepherd, and have dominion over them.
Their honor shall be no more, their form shall moulder
away;
The grave shall be their habitation.'

14. *And the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning.*]—This extraordinary version is owing to a neglect of the parallel line to, 'Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them.' It should be, 'And they shall be held in subjection equally with the oxen.' Here all is right. The mistake was owing to the disjoining of two words, *bamishrim*, 'on them the upright,' which, when in one, is *bemishrim*, 'in equality;' and in translating *libokar*, 'in the morning,' instead of 'with the oxen.' *Bakar* is Hebrew for an ox. *Bakar* is Arabic for 'the morning,' and opposed to the evening, as in Hebrew. *Alashee, walabekawr*, 'the evening and the morning,' in the Koran, Surat, iii. 36. *Bakar* is also 'ox' in Arabic, but differently spelt from *bakar*, morning: whereas in Hebrew the radical letters are the same for both; whence arose the confusion.—*Weston*.

14. *And their beauty.*]—Nearly fifty copies (among which are some of the best and most ancient manuscripts) have וצור; this signifies literally, 'and their rock;' but rocks having been used as places of strength, the word צור has thence come to signify metaphorically 'strength.' Symmachus and Aquila render also וצור, 'and their strength.'

14. *From their dwelling.*]—i. e. In consequence of their dwelling. See *Noldius*, or *Taylor*, on נ.

15. *God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.*]—

Here seems to be a personification of what we render 'the grave,' but which is in Hebrew שְׁאוֹל. We may read therefore, 'God shall rescue me from the hand of Hades, (i. e. the power of Hades) when he shall receive me;' for so the particle וְ frequently means. The Arabic version has the copulative 'and,' and reads more intelligibly, 'God will redeem my soul, and receive me from the hands of death.'

18. *He blessed his soul.*]—That is, 'He enjoyed himself,' and made himself as happy as he could.

18. *And men will praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself.*]—Rather, 'And is grateful to Thee, when thou doest him good,' agreeably to the Arabic version. The next verse will then follow in connection: 'Yet he shall go to the generation of his fathers, who shall never more see light.' The Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Syriac, and Arabic versions, all read, 'And he shall never more see light.'

20. 'A man of wealth, when he receiveth not instruction, resembleth the beasts, and is like them.'—*Street.*

PSALM L. VER. 1. *Called the earth.*]—That is, 'Called to the inhabitants of the earth.'

4. *That he may judge his people.*]—Rather, 'When he entereth into judgment with his people.'

8. *To have been.*]—It should be, 'They have been.'

21. *That I was, &c.*]—Bp. Horsley's version is, 'That I AM is such an one as thyself.' He observes, 'all interpreters seem to have forgotten, that אֲדֹנָי is the name which God takes to himself, Exod. iii. 14.'

23. *The salvation of God.*]—There is some difference here among the ancient versions, and Street thinks that we should read, on the authority of some Greek copies, יְשׁוּעָתִי instead of בִּישַׁע אֱלֹהִים: we may then translate, 'I will shew my salvation.'

PSALM LI. VER. 4. *Against thee.*]—The translation of this line cannot be correct; for surely he had sinned also against Uriah, in first debauching his wife, and then killing him by 'the sword of the children of Ammon.' God says of this action of David, (2 Sam. xii. 12.) 'for thou didst it secretly,' בְּסֵתֶר. The sense therefore of לְבָדָד, in this place, must be, that the crime was known only to God. We may read, *before* thee, not *against* thee. David will then allude to the clandestine manner in which he committed the sin, which was known only to a few of his courtiers. See Noldius, in ל, No. 8.

4. *And be clear when thou judgest.*]—The Syriac reads, 'Thou shalt overcome in thy judgments,' and the Targum, 'Thou wilt render thyself clear when thou hast judged.' These

interpretations may help to understand the Septuagint rightly; *νικησῇς ἐν τῷ κρινεσθαι σε*. The verb *κρινεσθαι* is in the middle, not in the passive voice; and the phrase *ἐν τῷ κρινεσθαι σε* signifies, 'When thou judgest.' I take notice of this the rather, because the passage being cited by St. Paul, Romans iii. 4, (and the Septuagint version of it having been inserted, instead of the Hebrew, which the apostle quoted) our translators seem to have mistaken the sense of it; for they render it, 'That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.' But who shall judge the Almighty?—*Street*.

In justice to our translators, it should be remembered, that by the words, 'When thou art judged,' is meant, when a judgment, or right decision, is formed respecting the dispensations of thy superintending providence.

6. *In the hidden part.*]—That is, 'in the heart.' See 1 Peter, iii. 4.

7. *Purge me with hyssop.*]—This is an allusion to the mode of purification from the leprosy, or from the touch of a dead body, as directed by the law of Moses. See Levit. xiv. 52, and Numb. xix. 18.

11. *Cast me not away from thy presence, &c.*]—'Deliver me not over to a reprobate mind.' The spirit of shame, sorrow, remorse, sincere repentance, and bitter anguish under the agonies of guilt, breathes strongly and fervently through every line of this hallowed composition.—*Delaney*.

12. *And uphold me with thy free spirit.*]—Rather, 'And let a free spirit again support me.' David considers that his transgressions had reduced him to a state of wretched bondage. The reader will observe that the words 'with thy' are supplied by our translators.

15. *Open thou my lips.*]—Which are now closed with shame, grief, and horror. Restore to me the opportunity, ability, and liberty, which formerly I had of speaking to Thee with freedom, boldness, and familiarity; as this phrase signifies, Ezek. iii. 27; xxiv. 27; and Eph. vi. 19, 20.—*Poole*.

18. *Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.*]—Some commentators think, that this and the next verse were added to the psalm after the Babylonish captivity; but there is no necessity for such a supposition. The buildings on mount Zion, and the walls of the city, might not have been completed, and David's intention of building a magnificent temple there is well known.

PSALM LII. VER. 1. *Mighty man.*]—Some imagine from ver. 7, that Ahithophel, and not Doëg, is the person here meant.

2. *Working deceitfully.*]—An edition of the psalms printed

at Cologne, A. D. 1518, has דמיה, 'executing slaughter,' instead of רמיה, 'deceit,' which (whether it be a variation made by accident, or design) suggests, that דמים, 'slaughter,' might, perhaps, have been the word in the text originally. The letters ה and ו have sometimes been mistaken for each other from the sheets of the manuscripts being ruled before they were written; and the letters ד and ר have often been confounded. That a razor is a very proper instrument to be compared to any thing that executed slaughter, every body will be ready to allow, though it is difficult to make out how it can resemble any thing that executes deceit, or fraud. The occasion of the psalm is also strongly in favor of the correction. The title tells us, that it was written when Doëg the Edomite had told Saul, that David had gone to the house of Ahimelech; upon which, as we are informed, (1 Sam. xxii.) Doëg, by Saul's orders, slew fourscore and five persons 'that did wear a linen ephod, and smote Nob, the city of the priests, with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep.' So that it appears from the history, that there was a great 'slaughter,' but nothing like 'deceit,' or 'fraud.'—*Street*.

6. From this verse and the next it appears, that this psalm is of the responsive kind, of which David may be supposed to sing the five first verses, a chorus the two next, and David the remainder.

8. *In the house of God.*—Rather, 'by,' or 'near,' for so the Hebrew prefix ב sometimes signifies.—See *Noldius*.

9. *Because thou hast done it.*—The original is כי עשית, which may be rendered more intelligibly, 'For what thou hast done;' or, 'Because of thy doings.' See the version in our Common Prayer.

9. *For it is good before thy saints.*—The Syriac version reads, 'And I will proclaim thy name from generation to generation before, or in the presence of, thy saints;' which, perhaps, was the original text.

PSALM LIII. This psalm is very nearly the same with the fourteenth. The chief difference between them is in the sixth verse, but it is too great to be attributed to any errors in the transcription. It might have been a variation purposely made, after the psalm was composed, in order to adapt it to another occasion.—*Street*.

5. *For God hath scattered the bones of him.*—This is generally referred to Sheba; who, being left at last to shift for himself, was shut up in the city of Abel, and there taken and beheaded; (see 2 Sam. xx. 22.) after which his body, most

probably, was exposed to the fowls of the air, or to wild beasts; so that his bones were indeed at last scattered.—*Dr. Dodd.*

5. *Against thee.*]—After these words, perhaps, we should understand, ‘O Zion.’ See the next verse.

PSALM LIV. VER. 5. *Cut them off.*]—The invocation in this address is evidently to ‘God.’ Such subaudita must often be admitted in the poetical parts of Scripture.

PSALM LV. In this psalm, David is supposed to make his prayer to God, when driven out of Jerusalem by the rebellion of Absalom, and in danger of being suddenly cut off. Ver. 1—8, Here he describes the sorrowful state of his soul: ver. 9—11, entreats that the counsels of the rebels may be divided and confounded: ver. 12—14, upbraids Ahithophel, the Judas of those times, with his foul treason: ver. 15—19, foretels the tragical end of faction: and, ver. 20—23, his own re-establishment, through faith in God, notwithstanding the base treachery of his favorite son and favorite servant.—*Bp. Horne.*

8. *The windy storm, and tempest.*]—The versions in the Polyglot add the word בלע, ‘devouring,’ to the beginning of the next line, and render it as a verb in the imperative mood. But it seems to be a participle, and to be the epithet of סער, ‘the whirlwind;’ as סעה, ‘impetuous,’ is the epithet of רוח, ‘blast.’ The description of that kind of whirlwind, which sometimes happens in the deserts between Egypt and Nubia, (cited from Maillet by Harmer) will shew the propriety of the phrase, ‘devouring whirlwind.’ ‘People ought to think themselves very happy when this wind, which is always very violent, does not raise large quantities of sand, with a whirling motion, which, darkening the air, render the guides incapable of discerning their way. Sometimes whole caravans have been buried by these means under the sand, with which this wind is frequently charged.’—*Harmer*, vol. i. p. 94—97.

The words in the text are figurative expressions, denoting the violence and tumult of popular commotions. ‘The sentiment is,’ says Bp. Horsley, ‘that he should with more ease provide a shelter against the storms in the wilderness, than against the malice of man in the city.’

9. *Divide their tongues.*]—This expression is equivalent to ‘Distract their counsels, and produce confusion among them.’ It seems to be derived from the miraculous event, which happened at the building of Babel, Gen. xi. 7, 9.

13. *My guide, &c.*]—David here speaks of Ahithophel.

15. *Let death seize upon them.*]—Or, ‘Let death suddenly disappoint them.’

19. *Of old.*]—‘From eternity.’

19. *No changes.*]—‘No reverses of fortune.’ *Aben-Ezra.*

20. *He hath put forth his hands, &c.*]—Here the Psalmist returns to the treachery and guilt of the traitor, Ahithophel.

21. *The words of his mouth were smoother than butter.*]—There is a passage in Theocritus very similar to this.

Το σωμα και παντας γλυκερωτερον· εκ σωματων δε
Ερρεε μοι φωνα γλυκερωτερα η μελικηρω.—IDYL. XX. v. 26.

‘My lips, sweet as cream, were with music replete,
For from them flow’d sounds as the honeycomb sweet.

Fawkes.

The Greek word, *παντας*, signifies ‘butter,’ rather than ‘cream.’ The classical scholar will not fail to recollect, also, on this occasion, ‘the honey-tongued Nestor’ in Homer. See *Il. i. v. 249.*

22. *Cast thy burden upon the Lord.*]—David, in the first hemistich of this verse, addresses his own soul.

PSALM LVI, Title. *Jonath-elemrechokim.*]—‘Upon the silent dove afar off.’—*Dr. Waterland.*

According to Bochart, it means, ‘To the tune of the dove in the remote woods.’ Thus David might call himself, when, after many wanderings, he got into the forest of Hareth; where he had leisure to reflect on what was past, and to compose this psalm. Fenwick would render it, ‘Concerning the oppression of the handful, or little flock, afar off;’ i. e. the little flock of true believers dispersed among the Gentiles. This psalm is well suited to the occasion on which the inscription says it was written, and which is related, *1 Sam. xxi.* David begins by imploring the protection of God, on account of the many enemies waiting for his destruction, ver. 1, 2; who wrested his words, and narrowly watched all his actions, that they might find some pretence to cut him off, ver. 5, 6: but he encourages himself by trust in God, and rests assured that He will deliver him, and give him renewed occasions of acknowledging his faithfulness, and celebrating his praises.—*Dr. Dodd.*

Street says, it is difficult to conceive why the psalm should be thus entitled; but the reason why it should be entitled, ‘On the affliction of the brave, that were at a distance,’ agreeably to the Septuagint, is plain from the next words, which tell us, that the psalm was written by David, ‘when the Philistines took him in Gath.’ See *Rosenmüller.*

2. *O thou most high.*]—Houbigant observes, the Hebrew מְרוֹם, here translated, ‘O thou most high,’ is nowhere found in the Holy Scriptures, as applicable singly to God. It means

elevation both with respect to place and condition, and should be here rendered, perhaps, 'in high stations,' alluding to Saul and his officers, or when he fled from them to Achish and the princes of the Philistines. Mudge renders it, 'with a high hand,' and Dr. Geddes, by changing a single letter, separating a word from this verse, and joining it to the next, translates, 'From day to day I am in dread; yet in thee I put my trust.' See note on title to Psalm xxii.

4. *In God I will praise his word.*]—This is rather obscure, and Street justly suspects, that instead of *דבר*, we should read *דבר*, the participle *benoni*, 'saying.' The reader will observe that it consists of the same letters, with a slight transposition of the *ל*. We may read, therefore, more intelligibly, 'In God I will glory, saying, In God I will put my trust,' &c. See, also, verse 10.

6. *When they wait for my soul.*]—Rather, 'As though they lay in wait for my life.'

7. *Shall they escape by iniquity?*]—This is improperly made a question. The literal rendering is, 'In vanity, or in iniquity, is the escape for them;' i. e. they place their security in a false religion. *Bp. Horsley.*

8. *Thou tellest my wanderings.*]—David's whole life, from his victory over Goliath, till the death of Saul, was almost entirely spent in wandering from place to place. He was now an exile at Gath; he comforts himself, however, that God was with him wherever he fled; and beheld, as no unconcerned spectator, the distresses of his unhappy situation. He therefore adds, 'put thou my tears into thy bottle,' which seems to intimate, that the custom of putting tears into the *ampullæ*, the *urnæ lachrymales*, or *lachrymatories*, so well known among the Romans, was more anciently in use among the eastern nations, and particularly among the Hebrews.

These urns were of different materials; some were of glass, some of earth, as may be seen in Montfaucon's *Antiq. by Humphreys*, vol. v. p. 78, where also may be found the various forms, or shapes of them. They were placed on the sepulchres of the deceased, as memorials of the distress and affection of their surviving relations and friends. It will be difficult to account for this expression on any other supposition. If this be allowed, when the psalmist, in prayer, says, 'Put my tears into thy bottle,' the meaning will be, 'Let my distress, and the tears which I have shed in consequence of it, be ever before thee; excite thy kind remembrance of me, and plead with Thee to grant the relief I stand in need of.' The allusion is pertinent and expressive. The next expression, 'are they

not in thy book?' denotes the confidence which David placed in the kind regard of God towards him, as though he took an account of every tear he shed, and would in due time remember and comfort him.—See *Dr. Chandler*, and *Calmet*.

The continual care and providence, which God exercises over his people, is frequently represented by his keeping a book, or register, in which he records their conception, Ps. cxxxix. 15, their birth, Ps. lxxxvii. 6; their actions, Mal. iii. 16; and what shall happen to them, Isai. xxxiv. 16; Jer. xxii. 30; Dan. xii. 1. See, also, Ps. lxix. 28.—*Dr. Dodd*.

12. *Thy vows are upon me, O God.*—The Targum reads, 'I have taken thy vows, O God, upon me.' By 'thy vows,' we are to understand those holy purposes and pious resolutions, which the laws of God impose on man.

13. *Before God.*—Rather, 'before thee, O God,' in the vocative case.

PSALM LVII, Title. *Al-taschith.*—The meaning of these Hebrew words is, 'destroy not;' and they form part of the title of this psalm, because David is supposed to have addressed them to one of his followers, when he was about to kill Saul in the cave. The same title is prefixed to the two following, and also to Ps. lxxv, indicating, perhaps, that they were to be sung to the same tune, or accompanied in the same manner.

4. Street thinks that the conjunction ו might have been dropped out of the text, and translates this verse, 'He delivereth my soul from the midst of the lions, when I lie among the fiery sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.' It may be rendered, more closely, and without change, 'My life was in the midst of lions: I lay among ferocious men; whose teeth were lances and arrows, and whose tongues were sharp swords.'

4. *That are set on fire.*—'That are inflamed with hostile and vindictive passions.'

8. *My glory.*—An elegant metonymy for the psaltery and harp, which immediately follow, in which David delighted and excelled. They might well therefore be deemed the subject of his boasting, or 'glory.' Green and others think it equivalent to 'my tongue.'

8. *I myself will awake early.*—It is, literally, 'I will awaken the morning.' This is a highly poetical expression, which Milton and others have borrowed:

'Cheerly rouse the slumbering Morn.'—*L'Allegro*.

10. *For thy mercy is great.*—The Hebrew word here used, נָחַם, might have been rendered as a verb, and the translation

would then be, 'For thy mercy extends even unto the heavens.'

11. *Let thy glory be above all the earth.*—The preposition *לְ*, in this last clause, would have been better rendered, perhaps, by 'over all the earth.'

PSALM LVIII. VER. 2. *Ye weigh the violence of your hands in the earth.*—This is scarcely intelligible. The Hebrew verb *שָׁלַל* signifies to reduce to a level, or an exact equipoise; and the meaning of the psalmist appears to be, that whatever violence they committed, their motives and pretences were in exact proportion to it, and gave it, in their estimation, the sanction of justice. The text would be clear, therefore, if we read, 'You reduce to an exact balance the violence of your hands in the earth.'

3. *From the womb.*—That is, from the time when they are first conceived; or, agreeably to the next clause, as soon as they are born.

4. *That stoppeth her ear.*—This alludes to one of the many fabulous reports respecting serpents. The viper was supposed, when attempted to be charmed by a peculiar kind of music, and by muttering a set form of words, to apply one ear close to the ground, and to stop the other with the point of her tail, that she might not hear what, if heard, she could not possibly resist. See note on Gen. iii. 1.

5. *Wisely.*—That is, 'skilfully.'

7. By substituting *כִּ*, 'against,' instead of *כִּי*, 'like,' and changing the tense, Street renders the latter part of this verse, 'He shall set his arrows against them: they shall be entirely cut off.'

8. *As a snail.*—The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions have, 'like wax;' which is, probably, right. See note on Prov. xv. 10.

9. *The thorns.*—Dry thorns, when used as fuel, make a rapid fire, and would heat a pot very soon. This circumstance seems to have given rise to a proverbial expression among the Jews, to denote that an event was speedily to happen; or that it would be of short duration.

9. *Both living, &c.*—The latter part of this verse is extremely obscure. Bp. Hare and Green read, 'Sooner than the bramble can heat your pots, let God's wrath, like a stormy wind, sweep them away.' But this is substitution, not translation. The Hebrew particle *כִּ*, here rendered 'both,' may mean, 'while,' 'as,' &c.—See *Noldius*, or *Taylor's Heb. Concord*.

And we may, perhaps, render it, 'He shall sweep them away, alive as they are, as with a whirlwind, and in wrath.' Not in mercy, as Elijah was taken away; to which event, perhaps, the

Psalmist alludes. See various conjectures on this text, in *Poole's Synopsis*, and in *Rosenmüller*. See Ps. lix. 13.

10. *When he seeth the vengeance.*]—Rather, 'When he seeth this vengeance,' or 'such vengeance;' and 'when he may wash his feet,' &c. See similar expressions, Ps. lxviii. 23; Is. lxiii. 3; and Rev. xiv. 20.

11. *Verily he is a God, &c.*]—Rather, 'Verily it is God that judgeth in the earth.'

PSALM LIX. VER. 6. *They return at evening.*]—Saul sent once to destroy David, and the messengers went back to inform him that he was ill; but they returned in the evening, to bring him even in his bed. The verb rendered, 'make a noise,' in the next clause, is used to denote the confused hum and noise of an assembled crowd. The Psalmist compares the muttered threats of his enemies to the growlings, or snarlings of a dog, ready to bite any person; and the comparison is just and natural.—*Dr. Dodd.* See notes on 1 Kings xxi. 23; 2 Kings viii. 13.

The streets of the cities in the East abound with dogs, which belong to no one, and are allowed to prowl about for food wherever they can get it. See *Harmer*, vol. i. p. 344.

7. *Swords are in their lips.*]—On reading this and similar expressions in Scripture, who does not recollect the strong, poetical language of our great dramatic poet, 'I'll speak daggers to her?'

9. *His strength.*]—Ten manuscripts, with most of the ancient versions, read, 'my strength.' The sense therefore may be, 'I will wait upon thee, O my strength; for thou, O God, art my defence.' See ver. 17.

10. *Shall prevent me.*]—That is, perhaps, 'Shall anticipate me in my wishes and expectations, with respect to my enemies.' This restores the parallelism in the sense, which we must so often look for in the poetical parts of Scripture.

14. *And at evening let them return.*]—This is a repetition of the 6th verse; but it must be understood in a different sense. The 6th verse is a real complaint of their fury and diligence in pursuing him. Here he speaks of them with a kind of indifference and contempt; and as free from any apprehension of danger. 'Let them, if they please,' says he, 'return in the evening, growl at me like dogs, and watch all the avenues of the city to take me: yet, like greedy dogs, they shall want their food, and wander about, as though shivering for hunger; for they shall not be satisfied, but murmur on account of their disappointment.' The 15th verse should be rendered, 'They shall wander about, shivering for hunger, and, because not

satisfied, they shall murmur.'—See *Dr. Chandler*, and *Houbigant*.

Dr. Waterland, for the word 'grudge,' reads 'howl.' The Hebrew verb *לל*, or *לל*, may here express any noise, that indicates complaint and distress.

PSALM LX. The subjects of this psalm are, the mercy which God had already shewn to his people, in delivering them by the hand of David from the miseries of subjection to other nations, which they formerly endured; an entreaty for the continuance of his favor; an acknowledgment of God's protection of David, of the Divine Providence having raised him to be king over the whole of Israel, and made him victorious over the neighbouring nations. The whole concludes with a profession of firm confidence in the future assistance of Jehovah. —*Street*.

Others think it difficult to reconcile the title of this psalm to any part of David's history. It is, indeed, by some, supposed to have been written by him, not during his war with the Syrians, but in the beginning of his reign. This hypothesis, however, appears to be without foundation. David was successful in all his wars; and never could say what is here put in his mouth. But when, then, was the psalm most probably composed? Plainly, after some great disaster had befallen the hosts of Judah; and no period, perhaps, is more proper than the commencement of the reign of Hezekiah. See his speech to the priests and Levites, 2 Chron. xxix. 5.

'The whole psalm consists of five parts. The first five verses make the first part. The 6th, 7th, and 8th, make the second. The 9th verse is the third part. The 10th and 11th make the fourth; and the 12th verse is the fifth.

Part I. Sung by the high priest.

Part II. A voice from the sanctuary.

Part III. The king's prayer.

Part IV. Semichorus takes up the intercession.

Part V. Grand chorus.' *Bp. Horsley*.

2. *Thou hast made the earth to tremble.*]—These are strong, figurative expressions, denoting the troubles and calamities attendant on civil commotions and war. 'The earth' here means 'the land of Judea.'

3. *Hard things.*]—An expression denoting adversity.

3. *Wine of astonishment.*]—Rather, thick, turbid wine. In Hebrew, this expression seems nearly equivalent to the common metaphor of swallowing a bitter draught.

4. *A banner.*]—'The khalifs, along with the *alcáb*, or titles, used to send to their feudatory princes a banner, which, while

they preserved their allegiance, was always carried before them. It was thus that the khalif Wathek invested Thaher ben Abdallah, about the year 873, in the principality of Khorassan.—*Richardson's Dissertation on the Language, Literature, and Manners of Eastern Nations*, p. 269, second edition.

Albertus Aquensis tells us, that, when Jerusalem was taken in 1099, about three hundred Saracens got upon the roof of a very lofty building, and earnestly begged for quarter; but could not be induced by any promises of safety to come down, until they had received the banner of Tancred (one of the chiefs of the croisade army) as a pledge of life. The Saracens surrendering themselves on the delivery of a standard to them, proves in what a strong light they looked on the giving of them a banner, since it induced them to trust to it when they would not trust to any promises.

Perhaps the delivery of a banner was anciently esteemed an obligation to protect; and the psalmist might consider it in this light, when, upon a victory gained over the Syrians and Edomites, after the public affairs of Israel had been in a bad state, he says,

‘Thou hast shewed thy people hard things, &c.

‘Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee.’

‘Though thou didst for a time give up Israel into the hands of their enemies, thou hast now given them an assurance of having received them under thy protection.’—*Harmer*.

Others render the original in the imperative mood, ‘give a banner to,’ or ‘hoist a standard for them that love thee,’ &c.

6. *God hath spoken in his holiness.*]—This is equivalent to ‘God hath solemnly promised.’ See *Rosenmüller*.

6. *I will rejoice.*]—David says this in his own person.

7. *The strength of mine head.*]—This perhaps is equivalent to saying, Ephraim is my horn; that is, the chief instrument of my power. Street translates very differently, ‘Gilead is with me, Manasseh is with me, the heads of Ephraim, the mighty judges of Judah.’ He supposes that the final *mem*, which makes these words plural, has been omitted.

8. *Moab is my wash-pot.*]—This signifies, ‘the Moabites shall be subject to me.’ The wash-pot here is a mean piece of household furniture for the use of the feet, (as the Syriac interprets it) the lowest part of the body, and was deemed a fit title for the Moabites; as we may infer from 2 Sam. viii. 2, where it is said, ‘he smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep

alive: and so the Moabites became David's servants, and brought gifts.'

The next phrase, 'Over Edom will I cast out my shoe,' signifies, 'I will trample upon the Edomites, and make them my slaves.' Compare 2 Sam. viii. 14. Or, 'I will reach out my shoe to them,' as a master does to his meanest servants, to be untied and taken off. See Matt. iii. 11.

'Philistia, triumph thou because of me,' may signify, 'let the Philistines also add to my triumph, by meeting me as their conquering lord.' Houbigant renders it, 'Against the Philistines I will be united.' See Psalm cviii. 9. Mudge is of opinion, that Ephraim and Judah being mentioned as affording a supply of certain things to David, we are to understand the same of Moab, Edom, and Philistia; the two former fulfilling the meaner offices, while Philistia is spoken of as his supporter: 'Philistia, be thou my sidesman, or supporter.' But the common interpretation appears the best; and the verses, stript of metaphor, may be thus understood: 'Gilead and Manasseh have submitted to me; Ephraim furnishes me with valiant troops; and Judah with men of prudence and wisdom. I will reduce the Moabites to servitude: I will triumph over the Edomites, and make them my slaves; and the Philistines shall add to my triumph.' See the Essay for a New Translation.

Gataker is of opinion, that the 'shoe,' or 'sandal,' is here supposed to be thrown out to Edom in order to be wiped, or cleaned; an employment of the most servile kind: which circumstance he illustrates from Aristophanes, and thinks that Edom may either be himself considered as the *ποδοψησρον*, or cloth to wipe the feet with, answering to the *ποδομπλινον*, or wash-pot, applied to Moab; or at least as the servant, who was to wipe the feet with it. See this learned author's *Cinnus*, lib. ii. cap. 19. But, as the ancients used to throw their shoes and sandals, when soiled with dirt, into some obscure corner, before they sat down to meat, and many might possibly have some mean place in their houses, into which they commonly threw them, it is possible that the throwing of the shoe 'over,' or 'on' Edom, might imply what M. Bucer supposes to have been meant: 'Edom shall be as the place into which I throw my shoe.' Herodotus (lib. ii. c. 172.) relates an anecdote of Amasias, king of Egypt, who expressed the meanness of his own origin, by comparing himself to an image that had been formed from a wash-pot, or a vessel for washing the feet in. Le Clerc applies this passage to illustrate the present text.

The original may be rendered 'On Edom, I will loose my

shoe,' meaning that he would put his foot on it, as on a stool, for that purpose. See *Rosenmüller*.

9. *The strong city.*]—Meaning, it is probable, 'Bozrah,' the capital of Idumea.

PSALM LXI. VER. 2. *Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.*]—The Syriac reads, 'Because thou hast exalted me upon a rock, and comforted me.' So also the Septuagint, the Vulgate, the Arabic, and the Æthiopic versions; but without the last clause, 'and comforted me.' If the present reading be considered as the right, the meaning of the text in our translation is, 'place me in a state of greater security than I am at present.'

6. *The king's life.*]—David means his own life.

7. *O prepare mercy and truth, &c.*]—Rather, 'O let thy mercy and truth still preserve him:' or, 'So order and appoint, that thy mercy and truth may preserve him.'—See *Poole*.

PSALM LXII. VER. 2. *I shall not be greatly moved.*]—'I may be disturbed and shaken; but I shall not be moved from my seat of royalty and power.' See ver. 6.

3. *How long will ye imagine mischief against a man? &c.*]—This verse is an apostrophe to his enemies. Green and Mudge would render the original somewhat differently, thus; 'How long will ye push against a single man? Ye shall all of you be slain; and fall on a sudden, like a bending wall, or a tottering fence.'

The word 'fence,' or 'hedge,' does not come up to the original; which means such a sort of 'partition,' or 'wall,' as when decayed is liable to fall and crush a man to death. In this view, the similitude is, not that they should be in a ruinous condition, like a decayed wall; but that they should threaten destruction to all who came near them, as a falling wall does to those who come within the reach of it; and, as the prophet expresses it, 'as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant.' Is. xxx. 13.—*Dr. Dodd.*

9. *Men of low degree are vanity.*]—In other words, their promises are empty, and they are not to be depended on.

9. *Men of high degree are a lie.*]—That is, 'they are false and treacherous; and the cause of falshood and treachery in others.'

PSALM LXIII. This psalm is said to have been written by David 'when he was in the wilderness of Judah;' but at that time Saul was living, ruled Israel as king, and was in pursuit of David; yet in this psalm David is called 'the king,' and he is spoken of as appointed by God to be king, 1 Sam. xxviii. 17,

‘for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour, even to David.’ Perhaps, David might be called king by his followers, even during the life-time of Saul, though he was not acknowledged to be sovereign by any tribe till after Saul fell at Gilboa.—*Street.*

1. *In a dry and thirsty land.*]—The Hebrew prefix, **כ**, should have been here rendered by ‘like,’ or, ‘as:’ the simile would then have been intelligible and striking. See *Taylor’s Heb. Concord.* on the letter **כ**, No. 29. Or, it is probable, that the **כ** might have been prefixed, instead of the **ל**.

8. *My soul followeth hard after thee.*]—‘My soul seeketh thee with ardor.’

10. *Foxes.*]—The Hebrew word which we render ‘foxes,’ is supposed by commentators in general, to signify ‘jackals,’ or ‘thoes,’ a gregarious species of animals, which are known to prey on dead bodies, and sometimes to dig them out of the grave. See note on Judg. xv. 4; and Cant. ii. 15.

PSALM LXIV. VER. 3. *And bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words.*]—This may be an allusion to the practice of fixing letters on arrows, and shooting, or directing them where it was desired they should fall, and be taken up. Timoxenus and Artabazus sent letters to one another in this way at the siege of Potidæa. Thus the Jews say Shebna and Joab sent letters to Sennacherib, acquainting him that all Israel were willing to make peace with him, but Hezekiah would not suffer them.—*Dr. Gill*, in loc.

4. *The perfect.*]—We are not to annex the same idea to this epithet in Scripture, that we do at present in common language. He is said to be ‘perfect’ with respect to religion, who believes in the providence, the unity and sovereign power of God, and admits no idolatrous worship to engross his attention, or divide his heart. To be ‘perfect,’ means not to be sinless, or exempt from all the frailties and errors of humanity; but to be entirely devoted, as far as respects our principles and opinions, to that which we profess. Hence ‘perfect’ may sometimes mean, when the relative duties of subjects to their king are considered, ‘strictly loyal.’ Taking the word in this general sense, David may be truly said to have been ‘perfect’ with relation to God, and to the zeal with which he promoted the interests of his country. For this reason, also, it is said of him, (1 Sam. xiii. 14.) in language adapted to human comprehension, that the Lord sought him ‘a man after his own heart;’ i. e. such a man, in this respect, as God wished him to be; particularly when we consider that he was surrounded with superstition and idolatry of various kinds.

8. *Their own tongue.*]—That is, the abuses of their own tongue; their falshoods and their calumny.

PSALM LXV. VER. 2. *Unto thee shall all flesh come.*]—The remainder of this psalm seems to contain the song of all flesh; and, therefore, after these words, we should supply the participle ‘saying,’ and read in the plural number, ‘Iniquities prevail against us,’ &c. The Hebrew affix ך might have been easily mistaken for a ך.

4. *Blessed is the man, &c.*]—Instead of ‘the man,’ we may substitute, ‘the people, whom,’ &c. See *Rosenmüller*.

5. *By terrible things, &c.*]—Rather, by placing the stops differently, ‘Adorable art thou in righteousness: hear us, O God of our salvation.’—See *Bp. Horsley*.

8. *The out-goings of the morning and evening.*]—That is, the remotest parts of the east and west. Those distant and opposite limits from which the morning and the evening seem to issue, or come forth.

9. *The river of God.*]—According to the oriental idiom, this may mean the treasures of water that are in the clouds, and that occasionally fall in rain. These are the waters which are said to be above the firmament. See Gen. i. 7. Or, more probably, ‘The river of God,’ may mean any stream that was at once pleasant and beneficial. The waters of Siloam, perhaps, or of the Jordan, are alluded to; for the blessing of seasonable showers is mentioned in the next verse. See note on Ps. xlv. 4.

9. *Thou preparest them.*]—We must here understand the pronoun ‘them,’ as referring for its antecedent to ‘the earth,’ which, by a common figure, is often taken for the inhabitants of it. But, in the next verse, it must be understood literally of ‘the ground,’ in the singular number.

11. *Thy paths.*]—In the language of Scripture, the words ‘paths, ways, steps, goings,’ &c. are used, when applied to men, to signify their actions, or the general course of their conduct. But when used with reference to God, they must be understood to mean the general dispensations of his providence. The old translation in our liturgy reads, very poetically, ‘thy clouds,’ and with great probability of being right. See verse 12. The Septuagint has ‘Thy plains, or fields, shall be filled with fatness.’

13. *They shout for joy, they also sing.*]—Strong, but beautiful expressions of Oriental poetry, to denote the cheerful verdure and abundant fertility of the rich valleys and luxuriant corn-fields.

9, 10, 11, 12, 13. From these five concluding verses, the

reader will easily observe, that when the divine poet had seen the showers falling from heaven, and Jordan overflowing his banks, all the consequent blessings were instantly present to his mind, and he paints them accordingly.—*Delaney.*

PSALM LXVI. This ode seems to be adapted to be sung responsively. Some parts of it speak of God in the third person: others are addressed to him in the second. In some places, the pronoun of the first person plural is used, but in the latter part the singular number 'I' occurs. These things appear to distinguish the portions of this composition, that were sung by different people.—*Street.*

The divisions in this psalm appear to be accurately marked by the word *Selah*.

9. *In life.*—Rather, 'among the living.'

12. *A wealthy place.*—'A place abounding with all sorts of good things.'

PSALM LXVII. VER. 2. *That thy way, &c.*—Rather, 'When thy way is known upon earth, thy saving health, or thy salvation, among all nations, the people shall praise thee, O God; yea, all the people shall praise thee.'

7. *All the ends of the earth.*—The most distant nations of the world.

PSALM LXVIII. The time and occasion of the composition of this sublime ode, are referred by the generality of interpreters to the translation of the ark from the house of Obededom to mount Zion. It was probably sung on that joyful occasion, and formed an interesting part of the solemnity. See the observations of Schnurrer in Rosenmüller. But some think it must have been composed after David's signal and repeated victories over the combined forces of the Edomites, Ammonites, and Syrians, when the ark was brought back in triumph to Jerusalem. That the ark accompanied the army in those wars, we learn from the words of Uriah to David, 2 Sam. xi. 11.

4. *By his name Jah.*—יה, 'Jah' is the simplest name in Hebrew for God, expressing the absolute and independent nature of his existence. It is the I AM of Moses.

6. *But the rebellious.*—Four manuscripts have יה, yea, instead of אך, but. We may read therefore more intelligibly, 'Yea, the rebellious exiles that dwell in a dry land.'

7, 8. *O God, when thou wentest forth before thy people, when thou didst march through the wilderness; the earth shook, the heavens also dropped, &c.*—What a sublime, what a noble idea this passage gives us of the Deity! There is a description of Neptune in Homer, which Longinus has highly commended,

and which has been the admiration of all antiquity: but how much inferior it is to this grand image of the Psalmist!

‘Fierce as he passed, the lofty mountains nod,
The forests shake; earth trembled as he trod,
And felt the footsteps of th’ immortal God.’—*Pope*.

The learned Dr. Kennicott observes, that by comparing the similar, or parallel passages in Judges v. 4, 5, there is an image wanting here, which concludes the description in Judges with great propriety. Is it wrong to suppose the 8th verse stood thus?

‘The earth trembled, and the heavens dropped;
The clouds also dropped water:
The mountains melted at the presence of Jehovah:
Even that Sinai, before Jehovah, the God of Israel.’

DISSERT. p. 502.—*Fawkes*.

There is an evident allusion, in the beginning of verse 7, to ‘the pillar of a cloud by day, and of fire by night.’

11. *The Lord gave the word.*]—Having celebrated the power and goodness of God, who fed them in the wilderness, he now proceeds to speak of the deliverances which he wrought for them from their enemies, with respect to whom ‘the Lord gave the word.’ The Israelites engaged them by his order, (see Numb. xxv. 17. xxi. 34.) and, under his conduct and blessing, obtained the victory over them. The next clause should be rendered, ‘Great was the number of the women, who published the glad tidings;’ meaning those women, who, with music, songs, and dancings, celebrated the victories of the Israelites over their enemies, according to the customs of those times, Exod. xv. 20; 1 Sam. xviii. 6. So, also, in this procession, between the vocal and instrumental performers, were the damsels ‘playing on the timbrels.’ The ‘good tidings,’ are those contained in the two next verses.—*Dr. Dodd*.

12. *Divided the spoil.*]—Rather, ‘Shall share, or divide the spoil.’

13. *Though ye have lain among the pots, &c.*]—The Hebrew word שִׁפְתִּים here rendered ‘pots,’ may mean the long parallel fissures in the rocks, or deep valleys and glens, with opposite and corresponding parts; or subterranean passages, which resemble works of art, from the order of their arrangement, in either of which, discomfited troops might hide themselves. See the Lexicons on שִׁפְתִּים, and שִׁפְתָּה. The sense of this very difficult passage will then be, ‘Though ye have been forced to seek shelter among the rocks, and have been polluted with smoke and dirt; yet ye shall soon assume the splendid dress of victory

and triumph; ye shall resemble, not only the gay appearance of the Assyrian banners, but the gorgeous, out-spread wings of the dove that are displayed on them.'

This interpretation will appear the more probable, if it be considered that the Jews, when they formed any grand procession for the purpose of celebrating victory, or offering praises and thanksgivings to God, were clothed in white.

Dr. Richard Chandler, in his travels through Asia Minor, has both taken notice of the doves lodging there in holes of the rocks; and of the shepherds and fishermen, who are accustomed to make use of such retreats, and to kindle fires in them; by which those doves must be frequently smutted, and their feathers much soiled. An attention to these circumstances may afford as easy and natural an account as any yet given, of that association of such very different things as doves and smoky places, which we meet with in this psalm.—*Harmer*, vol. i. p. 176.

Others refer this to the employment of the Israelites in Egypt; that of making bricks, tiles, and the coarser kinds of pottery. Compare Ps. lxxxi. 6.

13. *As the wings of a dove.*—The author of 'A Companion to the Holy Bible' adopts the interpretation of M. L'Advocat, in his Dissertation on this Psalm, and is of opinion, that the Standard of a Dove is here alluded to. The coast of Canaan was sometimes denominated 'The coast of the dove;' and we know that the worship of the dove prevailed in that country. That a standard displayed against Israel by the Assyrians should contain this dove, is no more unlikely, than that the Saxon standard, which was displayed when that people invaded England, should contain 'the raven.'

The figure of this raven was wrought by the hands of the sisters of the chiefs, and was, no doubt, embroidered with their utmost skill; and some reports even of magic attending the flapping of its wings, as a signal of victory, are come down to us: so this dove, wrought on the banners of the Assyrians, in honor of Semiramis, was decorated, perhaps, with the utmost magnificence, by those who had executed it, and was enriched with silver and with gold.

The Hebrew word שִׁפְתִּים, though it is usually rendered 'fire-ranges,' or 'pots,' means also instruments capable of use in war. In Ezek. xl. 43, it must signify Assyrian 'hooks,' or 'catches;' and that somewhat of a hook, or catch, was anciently appended to spears and lances, we know, from the construction of our ancient English bill, from the Lochaber axes of Scotland, &c.

If this interpretation be admitted, in preference to that

already offered, we may read, 'Though ye have lain exposed to the horrid weapons of your enemies, (and of course have been disfigured with blood and wounds) yet,' &c.

Instead of weapons, some would read 'ranks;' and Bp. Horsley has, 'the ridges of hills.'

14. *When the Almighty scattered kings in it.*]—The pronoun *it* must have the land of Canaan for its antecedent understood; and if this psalm relate to the victory of Helam, where forty thousand Syrians fell in battle, it will be scarcely deemed too strong an hyperbole, in oriental poetry, to say, that, owing to the images of silver, the profusion of white standards, and, perhaps, the scattered bones of the enemy, the land appeared as white as snow in Salmon. Virgil says, that the rocks of the Syrens were 'white with bones.' *Æn.* v. 865.

And Gay, speaking of the slaughter made by one lion only, has

'These bones, that whiten all the land.'

15. *An high hill.*]—The word גִּבְנוֹתִים is in the plural form, and means 'a mountain of eminences, or backs.' This may, perhaps, be a title peculiarly applicable to 'Bashan,' which seems to have its name from שֵׁן, a tooth; and הַר-בֶּשֶׁן, 'the mountain with teeth,' might be a name given it, from the appearance of the face of it studded over with small hills. Monserrat in Spain is an instance of a mountain deriving its name from its shape: as it is 'mons serratus;' or a mountain whose craggy cliffs have, at a distance, the resemblance of the teeth of a saw, (see the view of it in Thicknesse's Travels); and the Sierra Morena in Spain is an instance of a mountain named from its shape and color.

The meaning is, 'Be not proud of your height, ye towering mountains; for neither the loftiness of Salmon, nor of Bashan, shall invite the Lord to make his habitation there: Sion is the hill where He hath resolved to fix his tabernacle, and never to remove it, till the great Messiah deigns to visit the sons of men.'

18. *Thou hast received gifts for men.*]—Most of the ancient versions have, 'Thou hast given;' but the Septuagint reads, ἐλάβες, 'thou hast received.' The Hebrew, as it, at present stands, agrees best with the Septuagint, for לקח certainly signifies 'to take,' not 'to give.' St. Paul (*Eph.* iv. 8.) has quoted this passage, Ἀναβας εἰς ὕψος, ἡχμαλωτεύσεν αἰχμαλωσίαν καὶ ἔδωκε δόματα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις. This differs considerably from the Septuagint, and from the present reading of the Hebrew; but it agrees as well as we could expect with the Targum, the Syriac, the Arabic, and Æthiopic versions.

Dr. Randolph supposes the apostle, and the authors of the Syriac, Arabic, and Æthiopic versions, and of the Targum, to have had חלקת, 'thou hast imparted,' in their copies, where we have לקחת, 'thou hast taken,' in the Hebrew text at present. See note on Ephes. iv. 8.

18. *For the rebellious also, &c.*—This refers to the Gibeonites, and other nations, who were proselyted to Judaism; it may, indeed, allude to the conversion of the apostate, or wicked Jews, to whom the Lord became propitious on their repentance, accepted their sacrifices, and afforded them those blessings, which accompanied his residence among them, as their tutelary God and chief civil magistrate. There is a still more spiritual and sublime sense to be inferred from these words, namely, the reconciliation of God to mankind in general, by the meritorious death and sufferings of our blessed Redeemer; and, in particular, by the conversion of the Gentiles to christianity.—See *Poole's Synopsis*.

20. *The issues from death.*—The many providential escapes and deliverances from death.

24. *Thy goings.*—Rather, 'thy processions.' Or, perhaps, the allusion is to the established ceremony of the temple-service. See *Street*, and *Bp. Horsley*.

27. *With their ruler.*—Instead of רדם, 'their ruler,' *Street* proposes to read רדים, 'the rulers,' and instead of רגמתם, 'their council,' רגמתיים, 'the multitudes,' or 'the councils.' The letter yod has been frequently omitted. Dr. Kennicott, in his *Dissertation* on 1 Chron. xi. p. 516, has produced an instance of this letter being omitted thirty-four times in one chapter only. If the reading in the text at present be retained, and the questions be asked, 'Whose rulers?' 'Whose council?' I do not see any answer that can be given; consequently, if no answer can be given, there is no antecedent to the relative pronoun possessive 'their.'—*Street*.

30. *The company of spearmen.*—The Hebrew is, literally, as our marginal reading shews, 'the beasts of the reeds.' This passage seems to be made up of two distichs; one written in language that is extremely figurative, the other in such as is not so. For the last line of the last distich has plainly nothing figurative in it, which gives reason to suppose that the line parallel to it has not.

If we consult 2 Sam. x. 6, we shall find that the Syrians were originally hired as auxiliaries in the war, to which the battle of Helam gave a decisive turn in favor of the Israelites. 'When the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of

Beth-rehob,' &c. and upon their being defeated, 'Hadadezersent, and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river,' i. e. Euphrates. May not 'the wild beast of the reed' then be a figurative expression for the Syrians beyond the river? The Mesopotamian auxiliaries were 'hired troops,' and assisted the Ammonites for money: may not they be 'the people that marched for pieces of silver?'

The particle ל has the sense of *for*, (as 'for a price, or reward,' whether of money; or goods): see Gen. xxix. 18, 'I will serve thee seven years *for* Rachel thy younger daughter;' בְּרַחֵל בֶּתְךָ, and Gen. xxiii. 9, 'for as much money as it is worth,' בְּכֶסֶף מְלֵא. Therefore it seems, that בְּרַצִּי כֶסֶף may signify, 'for pieces of silver.'

The verb רָפַס is rendered, Prov. vi. 3, by the Vulgate, 'hasten,' and by the Septuagint ἵσθι μὴ ἐκλυομενος, 'go without lingering; or without fainting.' It appears therefore, that this word might be applied to the rapid movement, or marching of troops.—*Street*. See, also, *Merrick*.

By 'the calves of the people,' Bp. Patrick understands 'soldiers, as insolent and active as young cattle.' It is not likely that any comparison was intended. The expression may mean, by no unusual metonymy, 'the young men,' that were neither distinguished for their rank, or power; while 'the bulls' immediately preceding may signify men of mature age and of greater influence.

PSALM LXIX. VER. 1. *The waters.*—See notes on Job xxii. 11; 2 Sam. xxii. 5.

4. *They that would destroy me.*—Fifteen copies confirm the conjecture of Bp. Hare, and have מִצְמַתִּי, 'than my locks,' instead of מִצְמִיתִי, 'they that would destroy me.' We may read, therefore, 'Those that hate me without cause are more than the hairs of my head; those that are mine enemies wrongfully are more numerous than my locks.'

9. *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.*—Rather, 'Zeal for thine house consumes me,' in the present tense.

21. *Gall.*—Some understand bitter herbs; hemlock, hyssop, or wormwood. See Deut. xxix. 18. xxxii. 32.

22. *Let their table, &c.*—Many commentators are of opinion, that the verbs in this and the following verses should have been rendered in the future tense, 'Their table shall become a snare,' &c. This will give the language of the Psalmist the character of prophecy, and not the form of cursing and imprecation.

The sense of the present verse is, 'As they gave me, in my distress, only gall and vinegar; so shall the dainties of their table be productive of disease and pain, instead of health and enjoyment.'

23. *Their eyes.*—Not their organs of vision, but the powers

of their understanding; which the Psalmist predicts should be so darkened, as to render them incapable of discerning God's truth, their own duty, or the way of peace and salvation. The expression, 'their loins,' seems also to be taken here metaphorically for their passions and desires, which, it is foretold, would be in a state of continual agitation. But if a paralytic, or even rheumatic affection of the loins be meant, nothing could be more afflicting, or render them more miserably helpless.

27. *Let them not come into thy righteousness.*—'They shall not come within the conditions of thy salvation;' or of that salvation, which is proffered by thy justice and mercy to all.

29. *But I am poor and sorrowful, &c.*—Rather, 'But as for me, though I am dejected and sorrowful, thy salvation, O God, shall set me up on high.'

32. *And your heart.*—It should be, 'And their heart.' This is the reading of one MS. which seems confirmed by the preceding words in the third person; unless we suppose it addressed, by way of apostrophe, to those who were present.

32. *Your heart shall live that seek God.*—Rather, 'Seek God, and let your heart be joyous.' See *Bp. Horsley*, and note on Prov. xv. 10.

33. *And despiseth not his prisoners.*—It has been conjectured by Venema, and others, that this verse, and to the end of the psalm, was added in the time of the Babylonish captivity.

PSALM LXX. The lxx and lxxi Psalms form only one in sixteen MSS., and are so printed in some of the old editions. The first five verses, or the whole of Ps. lxx, as it now stands, are copied, with a few variations, from the conclusion of Ps. xl. The circumstance of the lxxist Psalm having no title prefixed to it, favors the conjecture, that it was originally incorporated with the preceding.

PSALM LXXI. VER. 7. *I am as a wonder.*—The Psalmist considers himself as the object of wonder to others, both with relation to the judgments and the mercies of God.

15. *For I know not the numbers thereof.*—That is, 'I cannot recount the numerous instances, which I have experienced, both of thy goodness and thy mercy.'

20. *And shalt bring me up again, &c.*—This appears to be an allusion to men, who have fallen into one of those deep pits that were intended as a snare for wild beasts. The meaning is, 'Thou shalt draw me out of the extreme danger, into which I am plunged, and in which I shall perish without thy aid.' Peters and others understand this of the resurrection of the body after death. See notes on Jer. xlviii. 43, and Ps. lxxxviii. 4.

The depth of the earth is here an expression for the lowest state of misery and suffering.

PSALM LXXII. VER. 1. *Give the king thy judgments.*]—Cause him to govern his subjects according to thy laws. By ‘the king,’ and ‘the king’s son,’ as Mudge observes, Solomon only is meant.

3. *The mountains shall bring peace, &c.*]—‘Peace’ may here be taken for the effects of peace, such as plentiful crops, prosperity, and ease. Street translates, ‘That the mountains and hills may produce peace for the people.’ He connects ‘by,’ or ‘with righteousness,’ with the following verse, and observes, that ‘mountains and hills were used as fastnesses in time of war; therefore, to wish they might produce peace, was to pray for peaceable times.’

It is probable, that there is an allusion in this text to a custom still prevalent in the east, of announcing good, or bad news, from the tops of mountains, houses, and other eminences. By these means, acts of justice were speedily communicated. The same custom is evidently referred to by our blessed Lord, Matt. x. 27; Luke xii. 3.

3. *By righteousness.*]—Rather, ‘Owing to, or in consequence of righteousness;’ meaning the blessings of a mild and legal government. See ver. 7. The sense would be clearer, if we read, ‘The mountains and the little hills shall bring peace,’ &c.

6. *He shall come, &c.*]—Meaning Solomon.

6. *Like rain upon the mown grass.*]—The meaning of the original is, ‘like rain upon the pastures that have been mown.’ When the grass is mown and converted into hay, the husbandman is particularly desirous of rain to produce the green herbage, called latter-math, or hay-grass, that follows.

8. *From sea to sea.*]—That is, either from the Dead sea, or from the Red-sea, to the Mediterranean. By ‘the river’ we are to understand the Euphrates; and by ‘the ends of the earth,’ the extreme limits of Palestine; or the land of Canaan on the west, to the boundaries of Egypt on the south.

10. *The kings of Sheba and Seba.*]—The Septuagint reads, ‘The kings of the Arabs and Sheba shall bring gifts.’ So that anciently, perhaps, Seba was the general name of Arabia; and Seba, or Sabæa, was that particular province of it called Arabia Felix, lying to the south, between the Persian Gulf and the Red-sea.

This verse suggests to our meditation several curious and interesting particulars, all tending to one and the same end. As, 1. The munificent presents, and immense treasures, brought to Solomon from Tarshish, and the isles of the Gentiles, 1 Kings x. 22, &c. 2. The coming of the queen of Sheba from the south, with her gifts and acknowledgments to Jerusalem. 3. The offering made by the eastern Magi, as the first-fruits of the Gen-

tiles, to the Saviour of the world. And lastly, the accession of the nations to the faith, (even these isles of the Gentiles) bringing their glory and honor into the city of God. See Isaiah, xlix, lx; Rev. xxi. 24.—*Bp. Horne.*

11. *All kings.*]—Meaning ‘all the tributary kings;’ unless ‘all’ be taken in a restricted sense, and signify ‘many.’

14. *He shall redeem.*]—That is, ‘He shall rescue, or deliver.’

15. This verse may be very differently rendered; for the pronouns may refer to ‘the poor and needy,’ as Lud. de Dieu has remarked, and not to Solomon. Dr. Geddes’s version is, ‘He shall preserve them, and share with them the gold of Sheba: so shall they continually resound his praise, and load him with daily benedictions.’

16. *There shall be an handful of corn.*]—Rather, ‘let there be an handful of corn.’ God shall bless the land with such remarkable plenty, that an handful of corn sown in the earth, nay even on the summit of the barren mountains, shall spring up so thick, and produce ears so plump and full, that, when shaken by the wind, they shall make a noise like the cedars of Lebanon: nor shall the city be less fruitful than the country; but become remarkably populous, and stored with all good things, as the earth is with grass, or flowers, in the spring.—*Poole, and Bp. Patrick.* See, also, *Rosenmüller.*

17. *His name shall endure for ever.*]—The person and kingdom of Solomon have been used all along as a channel, through which to convey a most illustrious prophecy concerning those of Christ. But here, the type seems to be wholly absorbed in the great antitype. ‘His name,’ his saving name, shall indeed remain for ever propagated, with the faith, through all the generations of men; while the sun, another of his representatives, shall continue to maintain his station in the heavens, and to diffuse his light upon the earth. In him, as it was promised to Abraham, shall all the true children of Abraham be blessed with the blessings of eternity; all nations shall call Him blessed, as they are taught to do in the remaining verses of this exalted composition.—*Bp. Horne.*

20. The second book of Psalms, according to the division and arrangement of the Jews, ended here. Probably they were called ‘The Prayers of David’ not only because he composed most of them, but first ordered them to be collected, and used in the temple-service, in the reign of Solomon, his successor.

The prayers here mentioned may be restricted to the petitions and predictions contained in this Psalm, which are now, with more propriety, applied to the blessings of the Messiah’s kingdom.

PSALM LXXIII. VER. 3. *When I saw the prosperity of the*

wicked.]—Concern, on this account, seems not only, on many occasions, useful in human circumstances, but inseparable in human nature from benevolence and love of virtue. But this is only because our nature is imperfect; for God sees infinitely more bad things than we do, and feels an infinitely stronger disapprobation of them considered in themselves: yet they cause not the least diminution of his happiness; for he knows that, through the direction of his Providence, they will be the means of the greatest good, and therefore we ought to believe it, and to be influenced by that faith as far as we are able.—

Abp. Secker.

4. *There are no bands in their death.*]—By a slight alteration of the Hebrew text, and separating לַמּוֹת into לָמוֹ and מוֹת, we may read ‘They suffer no tribulations; their strength is firm and entire.’ This is from J. Sig. Moerlius’s Scholia Philol. et Crit. as communicated by Bp. Lowth in Merrick’s Addenda.

Perhaps the present text is right, and means to state, that these men were never brought to condign punishment for their crimes; but in general died a natural death. Binding, or the application of ‘bands,’ was frequently used, as a preparatory measure, to the inflicting of capital punishment.

It should be remarked, however, that no conjectural emendation deserves greater attention than those which rest on different modes of dividing words and sentences; because in ancient MSS. there was no space between the letter that ended one word and that began the next.

6. *As a chain.*]—This seems to be an allusion to the chain, as a particular ornament, which they wore round their necks.

8. *They are corrupt, &c.*]—‘They are dissolute and abandoned themselves; and yet will wickedly utter calumny, or talk of oppression, in others.’

9. *Walketh through the earth.*]—Rather, ‘Is let loose on the earth, to utter calumnies and reproaches against whom they please.’

10. *Therefore his people return hither.*]—The Septuagint, the Æthiopic, the Syriac, and Arabic versions read, ‘my people.’ It is probable, therefore, that the authors of these versions read עַמִּי, not עַמּוֹ: the י and ו are frequently mistaken for each other.

Instead of הֵלָּה, ‘hither,’ we may venture to read הֵלָּה, ‘to them,’ a word made up of the same letters, but in a different order: הֵלָּה, ‘hither,’ is a relative adverb of place, and there has been no name of any place yet mentioned in the psalm.—*Street.*

10. *Waters of a full cup are wrung out to them.*]—By ‘waters,’

we may here understand all sorts of affliction and oppression. Instead of 'to them,' we may read 'from them,' or 'out of them,' as the prefix sometimes signifies. 'Waters of a full cup' may mean sorrows, or tears in abundance.

15. *I will speak thus.*]—Rather, 'I will reason thus.'

15. *Thy children.*]—The antecedent 'God' is here understood, though not expressed, as is often the case with the pronouns and pronominal adjectives in the poetical parts of Scripture.

17. *The sanctuary.*]—By 'the sanctuary,' we are here to understand, perhaps, the secret counsels of the Almighty: for the Hebrew word is in the plural number. Or, 'going into the sanctuary' may mean seeking divine knowledge and comfort by means of prayer, and meditation on the revealed word of God.

20. *Their image.*]—That is, 'their mere vision, and shadowy appearance of happiness and grandeur.'

27. *A whoring.*]—See note on Exod. xxxiv. 15.

PSALM LXXIV. This Psalm appears from ver. 4—10 to have been written soon after the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes. See Hist. of Jews, ch. vii, viii; and Rosenmüller.

2. *The rod of thine inheritance.*]—The Hebrew word שֵׁבֶט generally signifies 'the tribe,' and it is so rendered by many commentators: (see also the marginal reading); but our present translation seems preferable, for 'rod' here means sceptre; and, by a very usual figure in rhetoric, 'The sovereignty of thine inheritance,' alluding to the theocracy of the Jews.

2. *This mount Zion.*]—Rather, 'That mount Zion.'

3. *Lift up thy feet.*]—It should be, 'Direct thy footsteps,' a metaphorical expression, signifying to notice, or pay attention.

4. *For signs.*]—That is, for trophies, or monuments of their victories.

5. *A man was famous, &c.*]—The temple which Solomon built was a structure so hallowed and magnificent, that a man derived some degree of fame from being employed in cutting down the trees of Lebanon, which were to form part of the building; whereas now these haughty conquerors broke down the sculpture and carved work of it with axes and hammers.

9. *We see not our signs.*]—That is, we see no miracles, and no tokens of the divine presence, which were peculiar to the people of God.

9. *How long.*]—That is, 'How long this national calamity and degradation shall continue.'

13, 14. *Dragons.*]—Under the imagery of 'dragons' and 'leviathan,' the sacred writer describes Pharaoh and his host, who perished in the Red-sea, and whose dead bodies furnished food for the beasts of the wilderness.

15. *Thou driedst up mighty rivers.*]—Rather, ‘Thou driedst up rapid streams;’ and this may be the specific miracle alluded to, Numb. xxi. 14, 15.

19. *O deliver not the soul of thy turtle-dove, &c.*]—‘Deliver, we beseech thee, thy church, which, like a turtle-dove, can only mourn in secret, and make silent complaints unto thee, from those violent men who seek utterly to destroy her.’ Instead of ‘turtle-dove,’ several versions read, ‘one confessing Thee.’—*Fawkes*.

The meaning may be simply ‘Deliver not the life of thy fervent worshipper, who now complains to thee, into the power of the lawless multitude.’

20. *Have respect, &c.*]—‘Have regard to thy covenant, for the habitations of the land are full of darkness and rapine.’—*Street*.

21. *O let not the oppressed return ashamed: let the poor and needy praise thy name.*]—‘O let not thy poor afflicted servant, who now implores thy aid against his barbarous oppressors, be denied his humble request; but let him, and all the rest of thy miserable people, be restored to praise thy goodness in their ancient possessions, from which they have been banished.’—*Bp. Patrick*.

PSALM LXXV. VER. 1. *For that thy name is near.*]—The Septuagint and other ancient versions read, ‘We will invoke thy name, and rehearse all thy wondrous works.’ This first verse is supposed to be sung by a chorus, and the remainder by the Psalmist alone.

2. *When I shall receive, &c.*]—‘When I find the appointed time, I execute righteous judgment.’ Such is the translation of Mudge, who remarks, that this and the following verse contain the words of God in answer to the first verse. Others apply them to Judas Maccabeus, who exerted himself in correcting abuses and reforming the national corruptions.

3. *Are dissolved.*]—Houbigant, by reading נכונים instead of נמגים, renders, with Symmachus, ‘are established.’ By ‘the earth,’ perhaps, is here meant the kingdom of Judea.

4. *I said, &c.*]—The Psalmist here speaks.

5. *Lift not up your horn on high, &c.*]—This passage will receive some illustration from Bruce’s remarks in his *Travels* to discover the Source of the Nile, where, speaking of the head-dress of the governors of the provinces of Abyssinia, he represents it as consisting of a large broad fillet bound upon their forehead, and tied behind their head. In the middle of this was a horn, or a conical piece of silver gilt, about four inches long, much in the shape of our common candle-extinguishers. This is called kirn, or horn, and is only worn in reviews, or on

parades, after victory. The crooked manner in which they hold their neck, when this ornament is on the forehead, for fear it should fall forward, seems to agree with what the Psalmist calls, 'speaking with a stiff neck;' for it perfectly shews the meaning of speaking with a stiff neck, when you 'hold the horn on high,' or erect, like the horn of a unicorn. See, also, Psalm xcii. 10.—*Burder*.

In the celebrated treaty, also, between Penn and the Indians, the principal Sachem is said to have worn 'a horn' in his chaplet. Vid. *Clarkson's Life of W. Penn*, vol. i. p. 343.

6. *For promotion, &c.*]—'For exaltation is not from the east nor west, nor from the wilderness; but God is judge; he humbleth one and exalteth another.'—*Mudge*.

Dr. Delaney thinks that this refers to the situation of the tabernacle in the marches of the Israelites; when three of the tribes were to the east of it, three to the west, three to the north, and three to the south. And he apprehends that the prophet's design is to inform them, that their exaltation proceeded neither from the people, nor from their own merits, but from God, the centre and source of power; and therefore they should be humbled in his presence. Houbigant, after the Syriac, gives the passage a very different turn; and, supposing it addressed to the impious men spoken of above, renders it, 'For neither will there be any means of escape from the west, or the desert of the mountains.' See his note.—*Dr. Dodd*.

8. *It is full of mixture.*]—It is remarkable, that the Greeks and Latins, by 'mixt wine,' always understood wine diluted and lowered with water; whereas the Hebrews, on the contrary, generally meant by it wine made stronger and more inebriating by the addition of higher and more powerful ingredients; such as honey, spices, defrutum, (or wine inspissated by boiling it down to two thirds, or half the quantity) myrrh, mandragora, opiates, and other strong drugs. Thus, the drunkard is properly described (Prov. xxiii. 30) as one 'that seeketh mixt wine,' and is 'of strength to mingle strong drink,' Isai. v. 22. Hence the Psalmist took that highly poetical and sublime image of the cup of God's wrath, called by Isaiah (li. 22), 'the cup of trembling,' i. e. causing intoxication and stupefaction; (Chappelow's note on Hariri, p. 33) and containing, as St. John expresses in Greek this Hebrew idea with the utmost precision, though with a seeming contradiction in terms, κεκρασμενον αμπαρον, merum mixtum, i. e. 'pure wine made yet stronger by a mixture of powerful ingredients.' See notes on Prov. xxiii. 30, and 31. It will very easily be understood, that wine, full of such ingredients as are here described, must appear thick and turbid, מר. —*Bp. Lowth* on Is. i. 22.

PSALM LXXVI. This psalm appears to have been composed for the celebration of some signal deliverance of Jerusalem and its inhabitants from a warlike enemy. The overthrow of the hostile army seems to have taken place during the night, 'while they slept their sleep.' Perhaps the destruction of Sennacherib's army, (2 Kings xix. 35) may be the subject of it; and it seems that some ancient critics were of that opinion, since it is entitled *Ὦδὴ πρὸς τοῦ Ἀσσυρίου*, 'An ode to the Assyrian,' in the Septuagint at present; though that title was not in the Hexapla.—*Street.*

4. *Thou art more glorious and excellent than the mountains of prey.*—The meaning of this verse is, that Jehovah, who sendeth help to his people from mount Zion, is superior to the gods of the mountains, under whose protection the despoilers of the earth make their depredations. From the powerful assistance which Jehovah afforded his people from mount Zion, the Assyrians called him, 'The god of the hills,' and not of the valleys. See 1 Kings xx. 23.—*Green.*

Houbigant renders it, 'Thou art more radiant than light; thou art higher than the eternal mountains;' and Mudge, 'Thou shonest forth glorious from the mountains of prey.' It seems very doubtful what these 'mountains of prey' were. The common sense given to the passage is, 'Thou, O Zion, art more impregnable, through the defence of God, than the mountains upon which the Assyrians had fortified themselves, and from which their soldiers made frequent excursions to ravage the country.'

5. *None of the men of might have found their hands.*—A figurative expression, signifying that they had no power of acting. The Syriac reads, 'Their hands had no power.'

10. *Surely the wrath of man, &c.*—By the transposition of a single letter, Houbigant reads, 'The fury of man thou quellest; the remnant of their wrath thou wilt restrain.'

12. *He shall cut off.*—Rather, 'He shall control.'

PSALM LXXVII. VER. 2. *My sore ran in the night.*—Dr. Waterland and Houbigant read, 'My hand was stretched out in the night.' See the marginal reading. So, also, Symmachus and St. Jerome. But our present translation may be right. Nothing is more common in poetry than to transfer the sufferings of the body to those of the mind. By 'a sore that ran in the night,' it is probable, the psalmist meant a state of continued affliction, which he felt with particular severity, when he lay on his bed, and endeavoured in vain to enjoy the comforts and refreshment of sleep. Compare Isai. i. 5, 6.

4. *Thou holdest mine eyes waking.*—Rather, 'Mine eyes are kept constantly awake.'

6. *I commune with mine own heart, &c.*]—The Hebrew is in the future tense, ‘I will commune with mine own heart, and my spirit shall make diligent inquiry, saying,’ &c. in connection with ver. 7.

7. *Will the Lord cast off for ever?*]—The pronoun suffix *ני*, ‘me,’ which has been lost in the Hebrew, both in this and the following line, must be restored. The Syriac version has preserved the pronoun in both places.—*Street.*

10. ‘And I said, This my affliction is a change of the right hand of the most High,’ &c. that is, it proceeds from a change of God’s conduct towards me: his right hand, which formerly wrought miracles for the deliverance of his people, seems now to be turned against them.—*Dr. Waterland.*

13. *In the sanctuary.*]—The Hebrew is literally, ‘In holiness,’ and so it should have been rendered.

16. *The waters saw thee, &c.*]—An allusion to the miracle of passing the Red Sea, and the Jordan. Compare Ps. cxiv. 3.

17. *Thine arrows also went abroad.*]—This is an allusion to the hail-stones, the lightning, and thunder, which God sometimes sent to discomfit the enemies of his chosen people. Few images can be chosen to express the judgments of God with more propriety than ‘an arrow;’ which is often shot from an ambush, which flies unseen, which makes no noise, and kills, or wounds, in secret. See note on Deut. xxxii. 23.

18. The imagery of this verse is evidently taken from the manifestation of the Divine Presence, and the phenomena on Mount Sinai, when the law was given.

19. This verse contains a beautiful and sublime description of the incomprehensible wisdom and power of God.

PSALM LXXVIII., VER. 2. *I will open my mouth in a parable.*]—The Hebrew *משל*, which we render ‘a parable,’ rather means, as Bp. Lowth observes, a grave, sententious, and elevated discourse. See note on Job xxvii. 1.

2. *Dark sayings.*]—As there is nothing ‘dark, or mystical,’ in this psalm, we cannot suppose that the original is here properly translated. Bp. Lowth would render it, ‘pointed sayings.’ ‘Memorable truths,’ or ‘facts,’ perhaps, would better suit the important narrative, or the recapitulation of events, which follows. See Taylor’s Heb. Concord. on *מלל* from which, it is probable, comes the Latin ‘acutus,’ and our ‘acute.’

9. *The children of Ephraim, &c.*]—The history here referred to seems to be that of the Israelites going up, contrary to God’s command, to take possession of the land of Canaan, when they were smitten before their enemies, Numb. xiv. 40 to 45. The Ephraimites are here specified, probably, as being the most

warlike tribe, and as having led on the rest of the tribes to action.—See *Bp. Hare*.

Others think that the passage refers to a defeat of the Ephraimites, mentioned 1 Chron. vii. 21, 22; upon which Dr. Hammond observes from Kimchi thus: This defeat of the Ephraimites was in the desert; and though the story be not mentioned in the law, or books of Moses, yet it is written in the books of the Chronicles; where, on occasion of Zabad the Ephraimite, and Shuthelah, &c. it is added, ‘Whom the men of Gath, that were born in that land, slew; and Ephraim their father mourned many days, and his brethren came to comfort him.’ From the circumstance of Ephraim’s mourning, it appears that this happened before the Israelites entered into Canaan; and the manner of the relation shews that it was a considerable slaughter. Kimchi infers the greatness of it, by comparing the sum of the Ephraimites, when they came out of Egypt, which was 40,500, with their number in the plains of Moab, which was no more than 32,500; i. e. 8000 less: whereas in that time (about thirty-eight years) most of the other tribes had greatly increased. To this defeat, and great slaughter of the Ephraimites by the men of Gath, the result of their cowardice and unbelief, the Psalmist here probably refers.

10. *They kept not the covenant of God.*—Nine copies read, ‘Because they have not kept the covenant of God,’ &c. So, also, the Targum, and the Syriac version. ‘The idolatrous worship of the calves at Beth-el and Dan was first set up by Jeroboam, who reigned at Shechem, in mount Ephraim, and thus the children of Ephraim kept not the commandment of God, and refused to walk according to his law.’ (See 1 Kings xii. 25, 26, &c.) Upon which the prophet Abijah threatens Israel (1 Kings xiv. 15, 16) with utter destruction. This psalm might, perhaps, have been written about the time of the accomplishment of that prophecy, in the reign of Hoshea, king of Israel, and of Hezekiah, king of Judah. See 2 Kings xviii. 9—16.—*Street*.

12. *Zoan.*—It appears from Numb. xiii. 22, that Zoan was one of the most ancient cities in Egypt; and it may be taken here, by synecdoche, for the whole country.—See *Dr. Wells*, vol. i. p. 143 and 202. It is probable, that the field of Zoan was near the western mouth of the Nile, and the principal scene of the miracles wrought by Moses.

17. *And they sinned.*—Rather, ‘But they sinned.’

20. *Behold, he smote the rock.*—It should be ‘Though he smote the rock,’ &c. for so the particle *וְ* frequently means.—See *Noldius*, or *Taylor*.

20. *Can he give bread also? Can, &c.*—They were not satisfied and grateful; but presumptuously asked, 'Can he give,' &c.

25. *Man did eat angel's food.*—That is, very excellent food, divine food. The Chaldee paraphrast explains it, by food which came down from the habitation of angels; that is, heaven. See the marginal reading. It has been remarked, that the Hebrew word **אֱלֹהִים** never signifies 'angels,' but the rich, the great, and the powerful. See *Dr. Taylor's Heb. Concord.* on **אֱלֹהִים**.

27. *He rained flesh also upon them.*—The Hebrew word **שָׁר** might have been better rendered, in this place, by 'food.'

27. *Feathered fowls.*—There is nothing of 'feathered' in the original. The Hebrew term means any creature, or insect, that is furnished with wings; and is as applicable to locusts, as to quails. See note on *Exod. xvi. 13*; and the marginal reading.

31. *Slew the fattest of them.*—Rather, 'Slew them in the midst of their indulgences.'

41. *And limited the Holy One of Israel.*—Street reads, 'And required a particular miracle of the Holy One of Israel.' They either presumed to question the extent of God's power, (see *ver. 19*, and *20*;) or prescribed to Him what to do, and murmured if their particular desires were not gratified.

47. *Sycamore-trees.*—The translation in our liturgy is, 'mulberry-trees;' but the present reading seems preferable, as the wood of the sycamore-tree was held in high estimation by the Egyptians for making mummy-chests and sacred boxes.—*Dr. Shaw.*

49. *Evil angels.*—This is a bold and poetical personification of those causes, which, in the hands of the Almighty, produced the miraculous plagues on Egypt. See note on *John v. 4*; and compare *Ps. cxlviii. 2—10*.

51. *Ham.*—The Egyptians were descended from Ham. See *Gen. x. 6*.

57. *Like a deceitful bow.*—Which either breaks when it is drawn, or directs the arrow wide of the mark, and thus frustrates the archer's expectations.

61. *And delivered his strength.*—That is, the symbol of his power, meaning the ark of the covenant, which was taken by the Philistines.

63. *Their maidens were not given to marriage.*—Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, read, 'were not praised, or celebrated in songs.' So, also, the Targum. There is great variation in the ancient versions. The Vulgate reads, 'The fire destroyed the young men, and their virgins did not lament them.' So, also, the Septuagint and Arabic. But the Syriac says, 'Their

virgins were exceedingly harassed, persecuted, and distressed.' Another translation of the original may be, 'And their virgins chanted no marriage-song.'

69. *Like the earth, which he hath established for ever.*—The firmness and stability of the temple are here beautifully contrasted with the temporary erection of the tabernacle, which was moved from place to place.

PSALM LXXIX. This psalm was probably written on the destruction of the Jewish nation by Nebuchadnezzar. The author describes the calamities of the times, and prays God at length to put an end to them. As the prophet Jeremiah lived at this time; and, as more than one whole verse of this psalm (see verses 6 and 7) is found, Jer. x. 25, it is not unlikely that it was written by him.—*Dr. Dodd.*

Others refer this Psalm to the cruelty and devastation of Antiochus Epiphanes. See *Rudinger*, and *Rosenmüller*.

8. *Prevent us.*—'Let thy mercies come quickly.'—*Street.* In other words, 'Let thy compassion speedily succour us.'

10. *Where is their God?*—Where is now that God, of whose protection and deliverance these Jews so loudly boast?

11. *That are appointed to die.*—Rather, 'That are threatened with death.' The Hebrew is, 'The remaining sons of death;' that is, 'those whom death has hitherto spared.'

PSALM LXXX. VER. 8. *A vine.*—Under this image, the Psalmist represents the people of Israel; and the figure is continued to the 16th verse.

8. *Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt.*—See the same allegorical representation of the people of Israel, nearly, by the prophet Isaiah, ch. v. 1—7.

16. *Street* translates this verse as follows: 'Those that burn it with fire, and destroy it, at the rebuke of thy countenance, let them perish!'

17. *Let thy hand, &c.*—The meaning is, 'Be thou the helper of our sovereign, who is beloved by thee, whom thou hast endued with courage and resolution to defend us.'

PSALM LXXXI. 'This Psalm appears to be of the highest antiquity. It is certainly older than to be of David's time. For the use of Joseph's name, in the fifth verse, as the name of the whole nation, shews that it was composed before Judah became the principal tribe, while the place of worship was in the tribe of Ephraim; that is, among Joseph's descendants. The Feast of Trumpets seems to have been the occasion for which it was composed.'—*Bp. Horsley.*

10. *Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.*—That is, 'Shew a disposition to receive instruction, or to be fed with true wis-

dom, and I will satisfy thee to the full.' It is a strong, metaphorical expression, taken from the readiness with which young birds instinctively open their mouths, when they want food.

15. *Their time.*]—That is, the time of the Israelites, mentioned under the appellation of 'my people.' In the three concluding verses, it would have been better, if our translators had used the auxiliary *would*, instead of *should*.

PSALM LXXII. This psalm was composed by Asaph, the seer, in the days of Hezekiah, to admonish those who presided in the courts of justice, that, as God surveyed all their actions, it was highly incumbent on them to judge righteously; for the Lord would surely punish, with the utmost severity, the crimes which they might be guilty of in the execution of their office.—*Bp. Patrick.*

1. *Among the gods.*]—The Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים should have been here rendered, 'the judges,' or 'princes.' The translation of this verse might then have been, 'God, seated in his sacred divan, giveth this charge to the judges.' The divan is the great council-room, where all important matters are agitated and decided.

2. *Accept the persons.*]—The Hebrew is literally 'faces.' It is an idiomatic phrase, signifying 'to shew favor.'

4. *Rid them.*]—That is, 'rescue,' or 'deliver them.'

5. *They.*]—That is, 'the judges.'

5. *The earth.*]—'The kingdom;' or 'the land.'

7. *Like one of the princes.*]—It seems needless to say that these princes should fall like one of the princes. Bp. Hare, therefore, proposed to read הָרָשִׁים, 'the poor,' instead of הַשָּׂרִים. Like those, perhaps, who lying among the slain, are numbered, but not named. So, also, Abp. Secker, who seemed not to know, that his fortunate conjecture had been anticipated.

8. *Thou shalt inherit all nations.*]—I have presumed, says Street, instead of תִּנְחַל בְּכָל, to read תִּנְחַל לְבָכָל, which gives, 'For thou canst lead the heart of all nations.' The alteration is only in the division of the letters into words.

To say that 'God shall inherit all nations,' seems a strange expression. Besides, the verb נָחַל never has the preposition ב before the thing inherited, which would be the case here, if the reading at present in the text were retained.

PSALM LXXIII. Dr. Kennicott supposes this psalm to have been written on the war of Jehoshaphat with the Edomites, Ammonites, &c. (2 Chron. xx.) and indeed the names of the nations mentioned, ver. 6, 7, seem to give weight to this opinion.

But Dr. Delaney thinks differently. 'This psalm,' he observes, 'appears to have been written when there was a universal confederacy against Israel, entered into by all the surrounding nations, in the days of David; and not in those of Jehoshaphat, as several commentators have imagined. That there was such a league is evident from Psalm cxviii. 10, where David expressly declares, 'that all nations compassed him about;' and as it appears from the same psalm, that this compassing was before he had destroyed them, it must have been in the beginning of his reign.'

3. *Against thy hidden ones.*]—The Septuagint, Vulgate, Æthiopic, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read, 'Thy saints.' 'Thy hidden ones,' may mean those who are sheltered; or under thy protection; and therefore the present text, and that of the versions, are equivalent, or nearly the same.

6, 7. *The tabernacles of Edom, &c.*]—They are called the tabernacles of the Edomites, from the custom of these Arabians living in tents all the year through; encamping sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another, as they find convenience for themselves and for their cattle; a custom retained by their descendants even to this day. Gebal was once a place of renown: the country of the Giblites is mentioned as left by Joshua to be conquered after his death, (Josh. xiii. 5) and the people of this place were of service to Hiram, king of Tyre, in preparing materials for Solomon's temple, 1 Kings v. 8. At present, this city has lost all its ancient grandeur; which appears to have been considerable by the remaining ruins of it. But it still retains its name, with very little alteration, which is 'Gibyle.' It is situated on the coast of the Mediterranean, between Tripoli and Sidon. Compare Ezek. xxvi. 4, 5; and see *Calmet*.

13. *A wheel.*]—Bp. Lowth interprets גלגל, which we translate 'a wheel,' any light thing that is whirled and driven about by the wind, like chaff, thistle-down, &c. So, also, *Kimchi*.

14. *As the flame, &c.*]—In uncultivated countries, it is a usual practice to set the woods on fire, as the first step towards clearing the land; and, perhaps, the chaff and stubble, after harvest, were frequently used for this purpose. The custom is alluded to by Homer, Il. xv. 605, and elsewhere.

Μαίνεται δ', ὡς ὅτ' Ἀρης ἐγχεσπαλῶ, ἡολοὸν πυρὶ
Ουρεσι μαινήλαι, βαθεὺς ἐνὶ ταρφεσὶν ὕλης.

————— Nor less he raged
Than Mars while fighting, or than flames that seize
Some forest on the mountain-tops.—COWPER.

This translation conveys the general sense of the original;

but it gives no idea of the 'deep recesses of the wood,' which illustrates more fully the language of the Psalmist.

18. *That thou, whose name alone, &c.*—Or, 'That thy name alone is JEHOVAH, and that thou art most high over all the earth.'

PSALM LXXXIV. VER. 3. *Yea, the sparrow, &c.*—The meaning of this verse may be, that the sparrow and the swallow, or the dove, could build and lay their young near the altars of God; but that the Psalmist was excluded from that holy place.

By an allusion, in which there is exquisite pathos, he seems to envy the condition of these common birds. The text has been differently rendered thus: 'Even as the sparrow,' (i. e. with the same joy and delight as the sparrow) findeth her house, and the swallow, (or wild pigeon, *דורר*) her nest, where she hath laid *שְׂתָהּ*, her young; so should I find thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my king, and my God.'

5. *The ways of them.*—That is, 'The ways of those, who passing through,' &c. There should be only a comma at the end of this verse.

6. *Who, passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well, &c.*—Who, travelling through the thirsty valley of Baca, where there is no water, pass it as cheerfully as if it abounded with pleasant springs; and, depending on God, as the fountain of what they want, receive from him the blessing of plentiful and seasonable showers to refresh them in their journey, so that the whole company go from stage to stage with unwearied vigor, till they all present themselves before God, to receive his blessings in his temple, on the holy hill of Sion.—*Bp. Patrick.*

7. *From strength to strength.*—Rather, 'From virtue to virtue.' It is an expression denoting the progressive improvement of the righteous in every moral and religious duty. Virtue is derived from a word meaning 'strength, or power.'

10. *I had rather, &c.*—It should be, 'I would rather,' &c. and the 'to' before 'dwell' should be omitted.

10. *A door-keeper in the house.*—Rather, 'in the porch, or vestibule of the house of God,' &c.

11. *A sun and shield.*—God is no where else called 'a sun,' though, from his power of enlightening and cherishing, this seems no unfit appellation. Houbigant and Bp. Hare propose to read, 'A guard and shield;' but there is no necessity for an alteration, which is not countenanced by the Hebrew, nor by any of the ancient versions, though the Targum reads, 'God is as a high wall and a strong shield.'

PSALM LXXXV. The former part of this psalm does not seem to agree well with the latter, unless præterperfects be taken for imperatives; and to do this in six instances together, without any other tense, is very harsh. See Abp. Secker's note on this psalm, printed with Merrick's version. But if the præterperfects be construed interrogatively, the sense will then be uniform, and the end of the psalm will suit well with the beginning. It is a prayer; and such as might well be uttered by persons who had long felt distress, and the effects of the divine anger; but who now seemed to have some faint prospect of better days, through the favor of the Almighty. It concludes with celebrating the blessings and happiness, that may be expected, when he shall indeed 'speak peace to his people and to his saints.' The spirit of the psalm is an ardent hope for these things, mingled with a fear arising from the remembrance of former afflictions.—*Street*.

4. *Turn us, O God.*]—Rather, 'convert us.' Such is the general meaning of this expression in our translation. *Street* reads, 'Restore us, O God.'

9. *That glory may dwell in our land.*]—Rather, 'So that his glory may again dwell in the land.' The Psalmist indulges a hope, that the Shechinah might still appear among them.

10. *Mercy and truth are met together.*]—Goodness and fidelity, justice and concord, seem to have met here together; and, like ancient friends, to embrace each other with sincere affection.—*Bp. Patrick*.

13. *Righteousness, &c.*]—'Righteousness shall walk before every one, and direct his steps in the right way.' Such is the version of Symmachus.

PSALM LXXXVI. VER. 2. *Holy.*]—'Devoted to thy service.'

13. *From the lowest hell.*]—'From the deep grave.' The Hebrew is the common word, שְׁאוֹל.

PSALM LXXXVII. VER. 1. *His foundation is in the holy mountains.*]—That is, 'the foundations of Zion are on hallowed hills;' or, 'his foundation' (i.e. God's, meaning the temple) 'is on the hills of holiness.' As Jerusalem was built on several hills, mount Zion, mount Moriah, and others, they are called 'holy mountains,' or hills, the whole city being consecrated to God.—See *Dr. Chandler*.

The Targumist makes the first line of this psalm a part of the title.

4. *This man was born there.*]—Jarchi's exposition of this text is, The Philistines, &c. extol Egypt and Babylon, nations famous for antiquity, learning, and arts, when they say, Such

a man was born there. But that phrase which formerly belonged to them, shall now return to Zion; of which it shall, with much more justice, be said, to his honor, 'This and the other person was born there,' meaning a great number. The privileges of being citizens of Zion were unspeakably greater than what the inhabitants of any other city in the world were entitled to; because, 1. The city had God for its founder, and the ark of his presence dwelt in it. 2. As the solemnities of his worship were with great magnificence performed there. 3. As it was governed by his laws; and 4. As it was under his immediate and constant protection. In these things, no other city could compare, or vie with it.

5. *The Highest himself shall establish her.*]—This is what David promised himself; that as he had built the city under the direction of God, and had fixed a proper habitation for the ark in it; so God would now establish it, by guarding it from its enemies, and providing for its future prosperity.

6. *The Lord shall count, &c.*]—The Psalmist here describes the peculiar regard of God to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and figuratively represents him as keeping a register of all the nations of the earth, and marking in that register every citizen of Jerusalem, as entitled to his distinguished favor and protection. Dr. Waterland renders it, 'The Lord shall count in the roll of the people.' The metaphor is borrowed from the ancient Census; or the custom of enrolling the names of citizens in a book.

7. *As well the singers, &c.*]—The literal version of the Hebrew is, 'They shall sing like those who lead up the dance: All my springs are in thee:' i. e. they shall sing very joyfully; and the burden of their song in praise of Sion should be this; 'All my springs, or fountains, are in thee:' i. e. 'All my kindred shall sing and rejoice in thy safety,' as Jarchi explains it.

The original word מַיִם, which we render 'springs,' is used in a figurative sense to denote any one's posterity. Thus, Prov. v. 16, 'Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad;' i. e. 'Let thy posterity be exceedingly numerous:' and thus, in the place before us, the inhabitants of Jerusalem should triumph and sing, 'All my springs, or fountains; all my friends, my family, my children, are in thee; are thy citizens; they enjoy the glorious privileges with which thou art favored; they are all inserted in God's register, and entitled to his protection and favor.'

PSALM LXXXVIII. VER. 4. *Them that go down into the pit.*]—Before the invention of fire-arms, and in a country

where dogs do not appear to have been trained to hunting, the attention of man must have been a good deal occupied in contriving means for catching and destroying the different kinds of wild beasts, that principally annoyed him. Accordingly, we read of nets, toils, snares, and of the general kind of trap called a 'pit;' for which there are various names in Hebrew, appropriated, no doubt, to particular contrivances, of which we cannot hope, at this distance of time, to possess any precise knowledge. Now, whatever forms an object of general interest and attention, will enter into poetry, by way of illustration, or ornament. Hence, the Holy Psalmist, when in difficulties that seemed inextricable, represents himself as 'like them that are caught in a pit,' (where the pronoun may refer, for its antecedent, not to persons, but to beasts); as encompassed with animals that are furious, rapacious and violent; such as lions, dogs, bulls of Bashan, &c. (Ps. xxii. 12, 16. lvii. 4.) and when his enemies were endeavouring to circumvent and destroy him, or to plot rebellion and treason, their designs are naturally represented by the images of men 'digging pits, laying snares,' &c. (Ps. lvii. 6. lxiv. 5.) for wild beasts. The word 'pit' occurs no less than thirteen times in the Psalms: (See *Cruden*) but, instead of the same term being always used in the original, as it is in our translation, the words בור, and שחת occur four times each; באר once; דמור once; and שאול once. There are other distinct terms in Hebrew, such as גבא, גמע, פחת and שוח, which occur in different parts of the Bible, (See *Taylor's Heb. Concord.*) all which are occasionally rendered by 'pit.' This word, therefore, must be supposed to have various significations. It means a pit-fall, a net, or snare to catch animals; a dungeon, or place of confinement and punishment; a deep, miry pond, ditch, or pit, properly so called; a well; a cistern, or reservoir for water; a store-house, or place of concealment for treasures; the regions of the dead; the grave, or a sepulchral vault.

Applying the sense of the word, as the context may require, such expressions as 'They that go down to the pit,' may mean 1. Those who are embarrassed in consequence of their own vices; those who are caught in the toils of sin, or who have been enticed to misery and guilt by the wickedness and treachery of others. 2. Those whose crimes have brought them to infamy and ruin. 3. Those who are punished for their transgressions, or who suffer from the cruelty and violence of oppressors. 4. Those who, dying before their time, as a punishment for their sins, are said, (Ps. lv. 23) 'not to live out half their days.' 5. Those who are involved in the greatest difficulties and distresses;

(see ver. 6.) and 6. Those who are buried in a common grave, or who, being deposited in the sepulchral caverns of their ancestors, are said 'to be gathered unto their fathers.' See note on Jer. xlviii. 43.

5. *Free among the dead.*]—The Arabic Version is, 'Reckoned among the dead.' The meaning is, that he was separated, or dismissed from the affairs of this world, and considered as one among 'the dead.'

5. *Cut off from thy hand.*]—That is, 'deprived of thy protection.'

13. *Prevent thee.*]—'Come before thee.'

15. *I am afflicted.*]—Rather, 'I have been afflicted.'

18. *And mine acquaintance into darkness.*]—A figurative expression, to denote that he now never saw them.

PSALM LXXXIX. The author of this psalm lived either in the time of Jehoiakim, or Zedekiah, whose fate he laments very pathetically.

1. *I will sing of the mercies of the Lord.*]—Rather, 'I will sing of thy mercies, O Lord,' in the vocative case, after the Septuagint and Arabic versions. The original text was probably *הסדיר* instead of *הסדיר*.

3. *I have made.*]—The Almighty is represented as uttering the words of this verse and the next.

4. *Thy seed will I establish for ever.*]—The Psalmist distinguishes between David's seed and his sons; by the former he means the Messiah, by the latter his descendants. To his sons the promise is conditional, to his seed absolute. Of the Messiah, he says, ver. 29, 'His seed will I make to endure for ever,' &c. Of his sons, he says, ver. 30, 31, 'If his children forsake,' &c. 'If they break,' &c. Of his seed it follows, ver. 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 'Nevertheless, my loving kindness,' &c. to which the reader is referred.

10. *Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, &c.*]—Dr. Kennicott has happily corrected this passage. See his Dissert. p. 108. From the context, and the parallel words in Exod. xv. 3, 6, it appears that the translation should be, 'Thou, like a warrior, hast broken Egypt in pieces; with the arm of thy strength hast thou scattered abroad thine enemies:' for it alludes to the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red-sea; and the image is taken from the sublime ode in Exodus.

12. *Tabor and Hermon.*]—These two famous mountains of Judea, the first on the west, and the second on the east of it, are here put for the eastern and western quarters of the world. 'Shall rejoice in thee,' is a figurative and poetical expression, signifying, 'They shall afford matter for thy praise, who en-

richest them by thy bountiful providence.' Dr. Waterland renders it, 'The east and the west.'—*Dr. Dodd.*

14. *The habitation.*—It is in Hebrew 'the preparation;' and the meaning is, that justice and judgment should lead the way to regal authority.

15. *That know the joyful sound.*—This probably alludes to the trumpet, which was ordered to be used on the Jewish festivals, and for the purpose of assembling the people to public worship.

19. *Then thou spakest in vision to thy holy one.*—The Hebrew particle *כֵּן*, here rendered by 'then,' sometimes means 'formerly, of old.' It is so used 2 Sam. xv. 34; and Isaiah xlviii. 3, xlv. 8. More than sixty copies of Dr. Kennicott's collation, and a large number of De Rossi's, have the word in the plural form, *לְחַסְדֵּיךָ*: 'to thy saints.' All the versions and the Targum also render it plurally. See the next parallel texts.

21. *With whom my hand shall be established.*—Rather, 'Whom mine own hand shall establish;' meaning by 'hand,' power.

25. *I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers.*—Rather, 'I will extend his left hand as far as the sea, and his right hand to the rivers.' 'Hand' is here used for power and dominion. The meaning is, that his empire should extend as far as the coast of the Mediterranean on the one hand, and on the other over the Syrians, as far as the rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

27. *I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.*—I will set him so high above all other kings in the world, that he shall be the most eminent type of the great King of kings, and Lord of lords.—*Bp. Patrick.*

38. *But thou hast cast off.*—The speech of the Almighty concluded with the last verse; and here the Psalmist's own reflections and complaints commence.

40. *His hedges.*—A general term denoting fences, ramparts, or any other means of security and defence.

45. *The days of his youth hast thou shortened: thou hast covered him with shame.*—Thou hast put a speedy end to the reign of Jehoiakim, who, in his youth, was made a slave; and hast suffered Zedekiah to be most disgracefully condemned to lose his eyes, and remain a prisoner all the days of his life. 2 Kings, chap. xxiv. and xxv.

48. *Shall he deliver.*—Rather, 'what man shall deliver,' &c.

51. *The footsteps.*—That is, 'the actions, or the conduct.'

PSALM XC. Here the fourth book of Psalms, according to the Hebrew division, begins. This psalm, it is conjectured,

was composed by Moses, when the people had so highly offended God in the wilderness, that he shortened their lives to seventy, or eighty years, and suffered them not to arrive at the age of their ancestors, except Moses, Caleb, and Joshua, whose lives he prolonged to an hundred and twenty years.—

Bp. Patrick.

Street supposes that the first and last verses of this psalm were sung by a chorus, and the rest by the composer.

1. *Our dwelling-place.*]—The Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate, read, ‘our refuge.’ The variation depends on a very slight change of one Hebrew letter for another, and is countenanced by one or two manuscripts.

3. *Return, ye children of men.*]—Rather, ‘return, ye sons of Adam,’ as it is in the original; that is, ‘return to that dust out of which ye were originally formed.’

4. *As a watch in the night.*]—Sir John Chardin observes, that as the people of the East have no clocks, the several parts of the day and of the night, which are eight in all, are given notice of. Compare Is. xxi. 11. In the Indies, the parts of the night are made known as well by instruments (of music) in great cities, as by the rounds of the watchmen, who, with cries, and small drums, give notice that a fourth part of the night is passed. Now, as these cries awaked those who had slept all that quarter part of the night, it appeared to them but as a moment. There are sixty of these people, in the Indies, by day, and as many by night; that is, fifteen for each division. It is apparent, that the ancient Jews knew how the night passed away, which must probably be by some public notice given them: but whether it was by simply publishing at the close of each watch, what watch was then ended; or whether they made use of any instruments of music, may not be easily determinable; and still less what measurers of time the watchmen made use of.—*Harmer*, vol. i. p. 333.

At Aleppo, Dr. Russell says, that the criers sing from the Mosque at evening, midnight, and day-break.

7. *For we are consumed.*]—The particle *וְ* may here signify so; we may read therefore, ‘so are we consumed,’ &c. The context would then wear the form of a beautiful simile.

9. *For all our days.*]—Rather, ‘Hence all our days.’

10. *For it is soon cut off.*]—Street connects this clause, ‘cut off,’ &c. with the following verse, and renders, ‘But he is hastily and swiftly cut off, who feeleth the power of thy wrath, and the terror of thy fury.’

11. *Who knoweth, &c.*]—This verse may be more intelligibly rendered, ‘Yet who considereth the power of thy wrath, or regardeth thy displeasure with becoming reverence?’

13. *How long?*—‘How long wilt thou afflict us?’ understood.

PSALM XCI. Moses was probably the author of this psalm as well as the last, which was calculated for the use of those who were to die in the wilderness; whereas this is evidently designed for those who were to survive that threatened devastation. Both seem to have been composed soon after the irrevocable decree was past, (Numb. xiv. 29.) which condemned one part of them, all that were numbered from twenty years old and upwards, to a lingering death in the wilderness; and their little ones (ver. 33.) to a forty years’ wandering for their fathers’ sins, but with a gracious promise, however, (ver. 31.) that they should at length obtain an entrance into the land of Canaan. The occasion of this psalm is pointed out still more plainly at the 13th verse, ‘Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder,’ &c. There is something so particular in this, that it will suit no other part of their history.—*Peters.*

8. *The reward.*—This word is used in Scripture for ‘recompence’ in general. It is sometimes taken in a good sense, and sometimes in a bad one. It here signifies the retributive justice of God, and should have been rendered ‘the punishment of the wicked.’ See Ps. xciv. 2.

12. *Lest thou dash thy feet against a stone.*—A metaphorical expression signifying protection against the slightest injury. Instead of ‘dash,’ it would be better to render the Hebrew verb, *תגוף*, by ‘strike.’

13. *The lion.*—By ‘the lion’ and ‘the young lion,’ in this verse, some commentators imagine, that we should understand some reptile of the serpentine species, in order to preserve the parallelism. Street reads, on the suggestion of Bochart, lib. iii. cap. 3, ‘the black snake’ and ‘the aspic,’ in the former part of this verse, and ‘the serpent’ and ‘the dragon,’ in the latter. The whole is to be understood in a figurative sense, and means that the person of whom it is spoken should be enabled to trample on wicked and malicious men, without their having the power of injuring him.

PSALM XCII. VER. 7. *When the wicked, &c.*—The Hebrew may be rendered, ‘though the wicked spring as the grass, and though all the workers of iniquity flourish; yet they shall be destroyed for ever.’

10. *I shall be anointed with fresh oil.*—A metaphor alluding to the general use of unguents and perfumes among the orientals, and denoting great comfort and refreshment.

11. *My desire.*—As these words are not in the text, but supplied by our translators, it would be better, perhaps, to read, ‘Mine eye also shall see the fate of mine enemies,’ &c.

13. *Those that be planted, &c.*]—This verse would be better arranged thus: ‘Those that are planted in the house of the Lord, in the courts of our God, shall flourish.’ Virtuous and godly men are often designated, in the language of Scripture, under the imagery of fruitful, shady, and luxuriant trees.

PSALM XCIII. VER. 3. *The floods have lifted up, &c.*]—Under these metaphors, the psalmist indicates, that a great many furious enemies were combined against him, and threatened to overwhelm him with their noise and violence, like the waves of the sea.

5. *Holiness becometh thine house.*]—Rather, ‘holiness is the beauty of thine house.’

PSALM XCIV. Dr. Delaney supposes that David wrote this psalm on occasion of a battle, which was fought between the Israelites under the command of Joab, and the Ammonites and Syrians before Medeba, in consequence of the great indignities shewn to the messengers sent by David to Hanun, king of the children of Ammon. This battle is recorded 2 Sam. x; and 1 Chron. xix.

10. *Shall not he know?*]—It seems necessary to insert these words to fill up the sense, or else to transpose this line and the preceding one. ‘He that teacheth man knowledge, he that chastiseth the nations, shall not he correct?’—*Street*.

15. *But judgment shall return unto righteousness.*]—Here seems to be a personification of judgment and righteousness. Righteousness having forsaken Judgment, it is predicted that she should return and be again the associate of Judgment. When thus united with righteousness, it is said that all the upright in heart shall follow it; i. e. not only practise it, but support it, and abide by its decisions.

17. *In silence.*]—The silence of the grave must be here understood; which, indeed, the Septuagint and Vulgate express.

20. *Shall the throne of iniquity, &c.*]—Street’s translation of this verse is, ‘Shall Jehovah bless the throne of wickedness, that compelleth labor beyond the term prescribed?’ He adds that *עַל־הַקֶּ* means ‘beyond the statute.’ The statute is, Exodus xxi. 2, ‘If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free for nothing.’ And again, Levit. xxv. 39, there are further regulations and limitations of bond-service. So that there were terms, or bounds, prescribed by the law, or the statutes of Israel, with regard to servitude; and the compelling of it beyond that term, was an illegal oppression.

Others think that the text alludes to the tyrannical edict of

Antiochus Epiphanes, or some other oppressor, and read, 'Who sanctionest mischief and violence by law.' Shall the throne, or the power of the impious and wicked, be supposed to be associated with thy sovereignty in governing the world?

PSALM XCV. VER. 4. *In his hand are the deep places of the earth.*—That is, the deep places of the earth (meaning the fathomless caverns of the ocean) are in his power, or at his command. The Septuagint, the Vulgate, and most of the ancient versions, instead of 'the deep places,' read, 'the boundaries,' or 'extremities of the earth.'

6, 7. *O come, let us worship, &c.*—Surely exhortation to prayer and worship can never be better enforced than upon this principle, that God is the cause and creator of all things; that each individual being is upheld in the station it was first placed in, by the same hand which first formed it; that all blessings and advantages, which are necessary to the happiness and welfare of beings upon earth, are only to be derived from the same fountain; and that the only way to do it, is to secure an interest in his favor by a grateful expression of our sense of the benefits we have received, and an humble dependence upon Him for those we expect and stand need of.—*Sterne.*

PSALM XCVI. This psalm is attributed to David in the Greek copies; and it was probably composed by him on the translation of the ark from the house of Obed-edom to the place which he had prepared for it on Mount Sion. It is extant in 1 Chron. xvi, differing only in some particulars, which are supposed to have been added by Ezra, on the rebuilding of the temple, after the captivity. But, says Bp. Patrick, it never had a full completion till the Messiah came to dwell among us, who was indeed the temple of God. Several of the Jewish Rabbis acknowledge that it relates to the times of the Messiah, and the Syriac title informs us, that it was a prophecy of the coming of Christ, and of the calling of the Gentiles.

9. *O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.*—By 'the beauty of holiness,' the Psalmist means the tabernacle, or sanctuary. For, if David was the author of this psalm, the temple at Jerusalem was not then built; and thus it is applied at the 6th verse: 'Honour and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary;' and ver. 8, 'Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts;' which is immediately explained here, 'O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.' And thus the Septuagint renders it, both here and in Ps. xxix. 2, where the same words are used, 'in his holy tabernacle.' This was the

peculiar place of worship under the law, which is called 'the beauty of holiness,' from that excellent and incomprehensible majesty which dwelled there.—*Dean Sherlock.*

Whether we consider this as a positive direction, or only as a model of worship originally instituted by divine command, we may understand by it that the worship of God, the whole external face of worship, every thing that can add a beauty, a gracefulness, and solemnity to the offices of religion, ought to be performed with becoming dignity.—*Mudge.*

10. *Say among the heathen, that the Lord reigneth, &c.]—*Publish in every corner of the earth, that the great Messiah is the sovereign of the world, who alone can make you happy. For he shall settle those in peace who submit to his government, and they shall not be disturbed, as formerly, with wars and tumults. He shall administer equal justice unto all; he shall not suffer the good to be unrewarded, nor the evil to escape unpunished.—*Bp. Patrick.*

12. *Let the field be joyful, &c.]—*These are strong, but beautiful figures of Oriental poetry, in which the most distinguished parts of the visible world are called on to express their joy at the righteous judgments of God. See Ps. xcvi. ver. 7, 8; and Ps. cxlviii.

PSALM XCVII. VER. 1. *The multitude of isles.]—*Bp. Horsley renders the original, 'The various settlements of man;' and adds, the word 'isles' hath hardly any relation to the Hebrew אִיִּים. But it should be remembered, that the idea of 'isles,' in Scripture, differs widely from our present definition of the term. See note on Gen. x. 5; and *Parkhurst* on אִיִּים.

2. *Righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.]—*Or rather, the basis and support of his throne; for these words, compared with those in the first verse of the xcixth psalm, where the Lord that reigneth, is he that sitteth between the cherubim, seem plainly to point us to the residence which he chose for his glory, in a cloud between the cherubim over the ark, where the law of Moses was laid up.

But, as the mind was elevated by so noble a subject, it was natural that the ideas should enlarge themselves; that God, from being the protecting Divinity of a favored nation, should be God of the whole earth; that, instead of residing in a cloud over the law of Moses, he should appear enthroned in heaven, with clouds and thick darkness to cover him, and supported by everlasting righteousness, and the eternal law of things, upon which his being and authority are firmly established. In this view, those that love the Lord, the saints, the righteous, the upright, not of one people, but of the whole earth, and in

its remotest regions, have the utmost reason to rejoice and be exceedingly glad.

But if the words themselves did not justify us in this extended meaning, yet the reason of things obliges us to understand it thus; it being impossible to account for the justice of God towards a particular nation, but upon the ground of that universal righteousness and justice, which he deals out to all the world. Righteousness and justice differ from judgment, only as judgment is the form and operation of justice. Judgment is justice put into the form of law, and duly executed. These are said here to support the throne of God, to signify to us, that all authority and sovereignty, even that of God himself, is founded on justice, and an equal administration of it.—*Mudge.*

4. *His lightnings enlightened the world.*—The verbs in this and the following verse should have been rendered in the present tense, because no particular time, or events, are alluded to; and the Hebrew verbs should then be considered as aorists; unless we consider that there is a reference here to the display of the divine majesty on Mount Sinai.

7. *All ye gods.*—Rather, ‘all ye princes.’ The Hebrew word is אלהים.

11. *Light is sown for the righteous.*—Rather, ‘light dawns on the righteous.’ So the Targum, the Septuagint, and all the ancient versions, except the Syriac, which reads, ‘light hath shone on the righteous.’

PSALM XCVIII. VER. 3. *All the ends of the earth.*—That is, the most distant parts of Judea.

8. *Let the floods clap their hands.*—That is, ‘express their approbation.’ See note on Ps. xcvi. 12.

PSALM XCIX. VER. 1. *He sitteth between the cherubims.*—That is, ‘upon the ark.’ See 1 Sam. iv. 4, and compare the parallel texts.

4. *The king's strength also loveth judgment.*—Rather, ‘Thou art a king, that lovest judgment.’ It is in Hebrew מלך, ‘a king,’ not המלך, ‘the king;’ and the word עו, which we render ‘strength,’ may be an adjective, signifying ‘mighty;’ and belong, with its copulative, ו, ‘and,’ to the last line; ‘for it is holy and mighty.’—*Street.*

5. *At his footstool.*—That is, ‘before the ark;’ which is so called, 1 Chron. xxviii. 2; and Ps. cxxxii. 7.

6. *Moses and Aaron among his priests, and Samuel.*—He urges them to the performance of their duty towards God, by the example of these three eminent persons, who fulfilled it with so much constancy, and who procured from the Almighty so many blessings for themselves and others.

8. *Thou wast a God that forgavest them, &c.*—Perhaps here is an allusion not only to the general frailties and infirmities of human nature; but also to Aaron's sinful compliance with the clamors of the multitude, in consenting to make a golden calf; and to the sinful distrust of Moses at the waters of Meribah.

PSALM CI. David, being well established on his throne, resolved to regulate his family and court. He wisely considered that the example of the prince would have great influence on the morals of the people; and that he could not, with any dignity and consistency, punish the crimes of others, if he was guilty of the same in his own private conduct, or, if he allowed them with impunity in his attendants and courtiers. Determining, therefore, that he would severely punish all great and incorrigible offenders, he purposed to be himself a pattern of religion and virtue to his people; and to retain, as far as he could, none for his domestics and officers, but such as were men of principle, honor, and virtue. The schemes which he formed, and the regulations which he fixed on, in this respect, are transmitted down to us in the following ode; which will do honor to his memory as a good man, and an excellent king, throughout all generations.—*Dr. Chandler.*

1. *Unto thee.*—Or, 'concerning thee.' So the prefix ל, *lamed*, sometimes signifies.

2. *I will behave, &c.*—By considering the Hebrew word יָמַנְתִּי as a substantive, Street renders the former part of this verse thus; 'I will instruct in the path of virtue the men thou shalt place under me.'

Or, the Hebrew may be rendered, 'I will perfectly understand it' (judgment, in the preceding verse,) 'when it comes before me;' that is, 'I will not pronounce a hasty sentence.' By 'judgment' in Scripture are meant not only the just decision of a cause, and the cause itself, but likewise those rules and principles of equity, and that incorruptible integrity, on which the impartial administration of justice depends.

2. *O when wilt thou come unto me?*—Doederlein rejects the interrogation, and reads 'when thou comest unto;' i. e. 'when thou inspirest me with the gift of thy holy spirit.' As the means of having his authority respected and obeyed, David says, also, that he would set an example of piety and virtue in his own house.

8. *I will early destroy, &c.*—'I will soon destroy.' He means that he would speedily make an example of them, before they should have time, or opportunity, to corrupt others.

PSALM CII. This 'prayer of the afflicted' was probably written by Nehemiah in the time of the captivity, (see Neh. i. 3,

&c.) for the use of himself and other pious persons, who lamented the desolation of Jerusalem, and the ruin of the temple: though at the same time they had comfortable hopes, that the nations round about would shortly see their wonderful restoration, and be invited to embrace their religion; which was a lively emblem of the coming of the Gentiles into the church of Christ, the extremity of whose kingdom is foretold in the conclusion of this psalm. Mudge is of opinion, from the 13th verse, that it was composed about the time that God had promised a restoration to his people, i. e. after a term of seventy years; and that this was a form of prayer, directed to be used by every particular person in the captivity.—*Dr. Dodd.*

3. *As an hearth.*]—Rather, ‘as a fire-brand.’

6. *An owl.*]—Perhaps the Hebrew word **נָוִי** may mean, ‘the cormorant.’ Bochart thinks it signifies a kind of water-fowl.

7. *A sparrow alone upon the house-top.*]—The sparrow is a gregarious bird, and by no means a proper emblem of grief, or misery. The Hebrew **צִפּוֹר**, seems to be a generic term for any kind of bird.—See *Bocharti Hierozoicon*, part ii. lib. iii. cap. 21, p. 145.

We should read, ‘As a lonely bird on the house-top.’ This may be the owl; or the night-crow.

Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo

Sæpe queri.

Virgil, Æneid, iv. 461.

‘Hourly ’tis heard, when with a boding note

The solitary screech-owl strains her throat;

And on a chimney’s top, or turret’s height,

With songs obscene disturbs the silence of the night.’

Dryden.

9. *I have eaten ashes.*]—‘To eat dust and ashes’ seems to have been a strong proverbial expression, to denote the lowest state of affliction and misery.

14. *For thy servants take pleasure in her stones, &c.*]—That is, ‘They are still attached to her, and regard her with the greatest affection, though in ruins.’

20. *Those that are appointed to death.*]—Literally, ‘the sons of death;’ i. e. ‘the wretched.’ See note on Prov. xv. 10.

23. *He weakened my strength, &c.*]—This might be rendered in the potential mood, or hypothetically, thus: ‘Should my strength be weakened in the way,’ (i. e. in my progress through life) ‘should my days be shortened, I would say, O my God,’ &c.

A great number of copies, instead of **כֹּחַ**, ‘his strength,’ have the reading of the Keri in the text, **כֹּחִי**, ‘my strength.’ So, also, the Syriac.—*Street.*

28. *The children of thy servants shall continue.*]—Rather, ‘May the children of thy servants still continue, and their seed be established before thee!’

PSALM CIII. VER. 5. *Thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.*]—See note on Is. xl. 31.

16. *For the wind, &c.*]—Rather, ‘For when the blast passeth over, it is gone.’

PSALM CIV. Dr. Delaney is of opinion, that David composed this excellent psalm in the forest of Hareth, where he was daily surrounded with those pastoral scenes, which he so finely describes. After some general observations on the works and wisdom of God in the creation, he descends to the following particulars:—The rise of springs, the course of rivers, the retreats of fowls and wild beasts of the forest and mountains; the vicissitudes of day and night, and their various uses to the animal world; the dependence of the whole creation on the Almighty for being and subsistence! ‘He withdraws their breath, and they die; he breathes, and they revive; he opens his hand, and satisfies them all at once.’ These are ideas familiar to the Psalmist, and his manner of introducing them plainly shews them to be the effect of his most retired meditations in his solitary wanderings.

This psalm is supposed to have been sung alternately by two choruses. One addresses himself to Jehovah, the other speaks of Him. ‘As there is no allusion in it to the Mosaic ritual, nor any mention of the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, it should seem,’ says Bp. Horsley, ‘that it was of an earlier age than the Exodus.’

2. *Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment.*]—It is the property of light, in general, to discover objects to our senses; but the radiant glories which invest the divine nature, are said to dazzle the weak eye of the human mind, and to hide, by inaccessible brightness, what a less degree of light would serve to reveal. This exalted idea of the Psalmist may be considered as one of the most striking instances of the sublime. Indeed, the whole passage cannot be sufficiently admired.

Perhaps, there is an allusion here, and in some other passages, not only to the Shechinah, but to the burning bush, Exod. iii. 2. See note on this text.

3. *Who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters.*]—‘He flooreth his chambers with waters;’ i. e. the clouds make the flooring of his heavens.—Mudge.

Perhaps the idea of the Psalmist was, that the rays of light diverging from the sun when in the meridian, as their common centre, rested all round on the waters of the ocean, forming a

glorious canopy, a vast, illumined hemisphere; or else that the beams of his chambers, i. e. the heavens, were nightly laid, or extinguished, in the waters of the sea. Hence, the classical fable of the Sun setting in the ocean, or retiring to the bed of Thetis.

3. *Who walketh upon the wings of the wind.*]—In this expression there are an elegance and emphasis unequalled in any writer. Not, he flieth, he runneth, says Harvey, but he walketh; and that on the very ‘wings of the wind:’ on one of the most impetuous elements, roused into its utmost rage, and sweeping along with inconceivable rapidity.

4. *Who maketh his angels spirits, &c.*]—Rather, ‘Who maketh the winds his messengers, and flaming fire his minister.’—*Bp. Berkley.*

The Hebrew word is the general term רוּחַ, which means, ‘wind,’ ‘breath,’ ‘spirit,’ &c. Nothing can be more sublime, in the contemplation of human reason, than this personification of the elements of nature, by which they are said to be the angels and ministers of God. We may observe, however, that this imagery must have been more familiar, and yet at the same time more impressive, in a country where hurricanes were tremendous; where the pestilential blast, called the samiel, or simoom, was frequent, and swept away thousands; (see Thevenot, part ii. p. 57.) and where the thunder and lightning were often so awful and destructive, that we can have but a faint idea of their effects. Compare Ps. clxviii. 2—10.

5. *Who laid the foundations, &c.*]—Here the inspired Psalmist speaks according to the popular notion of the times. Indeed, the language of poetry and of true philosophy are sometimes at variance. Even the errors, the fables, and superstitions of mankind enter into the former, and often constitute a portion of its ornament and grace; nor are they entirely excluded from the pages of the sacred bards: and it cannot be too often remembered, that it formed no part of the inspired authors of the Holy Scriptures, to correct the various mistakes of ignorance, in matters of mere science, or to forestal the discoveries of future ages; their principal object was to reveal the will of God, and to teach men their moral and religious duties.

6. *The waters stood above the mountains.*]—As our translators have rendered the Hebrew verb in the past tense, the English reader may be naturally led to suppose, that the present text relates to the general deluge, or to that chaotic state which preceded the creation: but the original is in the future tense, which might have been rendered as an aorist, ‘The waters stand upon,’ &c. The words of the holy Psalmist will

then refer to a very usual phænomenon, though it has never been satisfactorily explained; that of springs, ponds, &c. being frequently found on the tops of high hills and mountains. The verbs in the next verse might also have been in the present tense. See ver. 8; and the margin of Montanus's Bible.

7. *At the voice of thy thunder.*]—That is, 'At thy sovereign command.' The ancient Hebrews considered thunder as the voice of God. Indeed, they piously and habitually ascribed every effect, that was unconnected with their own wilful folly and sin, to the Great First Cause of all things, and considered those phænomena which we call the laws of nature, as proceeding immediately from his wisdom and power. The miracles at the Red sea, and the Jordan, may be here referred to; or, if the verb be taken in the present tense, we may suppose that the Psalmist alludes to the flux and reflux of the tide.

17. *As for the stork, the fir-trees are her house.*]—Among the birds that appear and disappear in Palestine, storks are mentioned in our translation; and, accordingly, Doubdan found them in the month of May, in great numbers, residing in Galilee.

Returning from Cana to Nazareth, on the 8th of May, in which journey he complains the heat was so great, that they could scarcely breathe, he adds: 'I would not forget to observe, that all these fields were so filled with flocks of storks, that they appeared quite white with them, there being above a thousand in each flock; and when they rose and hovered in the air, they seemed like clouds. In the evening, they rest on trees. There were thousands of them in the meadow, which lies at the foot of Nazareth, which was quite covered with them. The inhabitants do them no hurt, on account of their devouring all kinds of venomous animals, serpents, adders, and toads, and clearing the country of them.'

Dr. Shaw saw them in the air, returning from the south, as he lay at anchor near mount Carmel. Whether they build their nests where they roost, in that country, Doubdan does not say: our version of this text has been understood to suppose this, which may be perfectly just, 'Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir-trees are her house.' Where they rest, where they sleep after the wanderings of the day are over, there their house, or home, may be said to be.

18. *The coneys.*]—*פוש*, not the coney, or rabbit, but the *αρκτομυς*, i. e. the bear-mouse of the Greeks, and the al-jarbuo of the Arabs. We have no name for it. A drawing of it (from a creature brought over by Dr. Sherard), with descriptions,

are in Haym's *Tesoro Britannico*, vol. ii. p. 124, &c. See also *Bochart*, iii. 33.—*Dr. Kennicott*.

Buxtorf calls it 'the mountain mouse.' See *Scheuchzer's Physica Sacra*, or *Parkhurst*.

22. *The sun ariseth.*—The connection between this verse and the following would appear more evident by supplying the particles *when* and *but*, 'When the sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their dens; but man goeth forth,' &c. The language of the Psalmist shews the sovereignty of man over the rest of the creation, by remarking, that when he goes forth to his daily labors, the beasts of the earth retire to their dens, impressed with instinctive reverence and awe.

25. *Both small and great beasts.*—Rather, 'Animals both small and great.'

26. *That leviathan.*—It is difficult to say what specific creature is here meant. Some commentators think it is the crocodile, some the hippopotamus, and others, with equal probability, believe it to be the whale.

31. *The Lord shall rejoice in his works.*—Rather, 'The Lord rejoices in his works.'

PSALM CV. It appears from 1 Chron. xvi. 7, that David was the author of the first part, at least, of this psalm, after his obtaining several signal victories over the Philistines: and he himself, probably, enlarged it afterwards with the glorious detail of the mercies of God to the ancestors of the Jews, from the days of Abraham. There are some few variations, though of little consequence, in this psalm, and that found, 1 Chron. xvi; but what follows from ver. 15 of the former, and ver. 22 of the latter, to the end, is different in both.

16. *He brake the whole staff of bread.*—Bread is called 'the staff of life.' The breaking of this staff, therefore, is an expression equivalent to producing a famine. Thus the parallelism is preserved between the latter part of the verse and the former.

18. *Whose feet they hurt with fetters, &c.*—We do not read of this in Genesis; so that these cruelties were practised on him, perhaps, by the Midianitish merchants: or it might have been inferred, as the natural consequence of his being cast into prison. See Gen. xxxix. 20.

19. *Until the time that his word came.*—Rather, 'Until the time that what he predicted came to pass.'

19. *The word of the Lord tried him.*—That is, the sentence of the Lord tried him, and proved him guiltless.

22. *To bind his princes.*—Rather, 'to restrain his princes.'

28. *And they rebelled not against his word.*—And his words

were not changed; i. e. 'what he commanded to be done was done.' Street's version is, 'Because they disobeyed his word.'

A critic of the present day reads, 'Yet they changed not their resolutions,' and adds the following comment. A negative particle in this verse has given much trouble to interpreters. It seems not to have been read by the Septuagint, or Syriac, yet it is found in the Latin Vulgate made from the Septuagint, and in all the other versions, except the Syriac and Arabic, which latter is a copy from the Septuagint. It would be tedious to detail here all the expedients that have been thought of by modern critics to remove the difficulty. Our various English translations before Green may be seen in Crutwell's edition of Bp. Wilson's Bible. I think that the text is not to be disturbed; but that one word is to be differently pointed: this gives the congruous version which I have made.

40. *Quails.*]—See note on Exod. xvi. 13.

45. *That they might.*]—Rather, 'On condition that they should observe his statutes,' &c.

45. *They inherited the labor of the people.*]—That is, 'The produce of their labor;' the cities which they had built, the vineyards which they had planted, &c.

PSALM CVI. This psalm appears to be of the responsive kind; the three first verses having been designed to be performed by one singer alone, the next four by a chorus of the people, the next thirty-nine by one voice, and the forty-seventh, which concludes the psalm, by the chorus. For Jehovah is invoked in the second person in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and forty-seventh verses, and he is spoken of in the third throughout the rest of the psalm. The first verse contains an exhortation to pay homage to Jehovah, and the pronouns of the first person are in the plural number in the seventh, and forty-seventh verses.—*Street.*

It appears to have been written during the captivity. See ver. 47.

4. *Remember me.*]—Two MSS. have זכרנו, 'remember us,' instead of זכרני, 'remember me,' and one has פקדנו, 'visit us,' instead of פקדני, 'visit me.' The correction of the pronoun into the plural number is confirmed by all the ancient versions. The Targum alone is in favor of the present reading, which is evidently wrong, as we have חטאנו, 'we have sinned,' in the sixth verse.—*Street.*

7. *But provoked him.*]—Rather, 'but rebelled while marching toward the Red-sea.' This reading depends on uniting

two words in Hebrew, which had been improperly divided; and it is confirmed by the Septuagint.

15. *But sent leanness into their soul.*—Houbigant follows several of the ancient versions, and reads ‘Satiety, or loathing,’ into their souls. Bp. Lowth supposes, that instead of רָחוּץ, leanness, we should read רָחוּץ, ‘nausea, loathing, or surfeit,’ which is strongly supported by Numb. xi. 20, where the portion of history alluded to is recorded, and where the word רָחוּץ is used, and rendered ‘loathsome.’—See *Merrick*, or *Street*.

20. *Their glory.*—That is, God, who ought to have been the peculiar object of their glory, because he adopted them as his children, and took them under his immediate protection.

26. *He lifted up his hand.*—Compare Ezek. xx. 23. ‘To lift up the hand,’ is equivalent to ‘swearing.’ See Deut. xxxii. 40, Numb. xiv. 30, marginal reading.—*Dr. Kennicott*.

Or, rather, it here signifies the preparatory act of divine punishment.

28. *The sacrifices of the dead.*—Sacrifices offered to false Gods, or idols; mere blocks of wood, or stone, and significantly called ‘dead,’ in contrast with Jehovah, the ever-living God. See *Rosenmüller*.

30. *And executed judgment.*—‘And made atonement.’—*Dr. Waterland*.

In other words, he executed the sentence, which justice seemed to require.

38. *The blood of their sons and of their daughters.*—See note on Deut. xii. 31.

PSALM CVII. This psalm has a distich, which returns as a burden; and that distich has another constantly joined with it, which alludes to the matter treated of in the preceding stanza. The stanzas, I apprehend, were intended to be performed by one singer alone; and these distichs by a chorus, or band. But after the last stanza, instead of the distich, which returns throughout the rest of the composition, there is another which most aptly closes the whole piece, and might probably have been sung by all the performers together.—*Street*.

10. *Such as sit in darkness.*—Rather, ‘Those who sat in darkness,’ &c.

12. *Therefore.*—This illative conjunction is here superfluous, and the sense will be more distinct if it is omitted. It is the Hebrew copulative ו, *vau*, that is here used, which is often deficient, and often redundant.

16. *The gates of brass.*—Rather, ‘gates of brass and bars of iron,’ meaning that he removed the greatest obstacles and

impediments. The Hebrew words are different, and there is no prepositive article.

From the expressions used in this verse, I am inclined to think, says Street, that this psalm was written after the delivery from the captivity of Babylon. See Isai. xlv. 2, and Bp. Lowth's note on that passage in his new translation.

39. *Again, they are minished and, &c.*—Houbigant most ingeniously conjectures, that we should read וַיִּמְעַלּוּ, 'when they sin,' instead of וַיִּמְעַטּוּ, 'again they are minished;' which correction the Chaldee paraphrast suggested to him; who yet plainly did not read so, but added 'when they sin,' by way of explanation.—*Abp. Secker.*

40. *In the wilderness, where there is no way.*—Rather, 'in a labyrinth, in a pathless desert,' or 'in confusion.' The Hebrew is בְּתַהוֹ, the same word that is used Gen. i. 2, to express that the earth was 'without form and void.'

PSALM CVIII. This psalm is made up of others: (compare Ps. lvii. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and Ps. lx. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, and see the notes there given) which were, perhaps, put together on some occasion by a composer of music among the Jews, who lived after the time of David.—*Street.*

PSALM CIX. VER. 2. *With a lying tongue.*—The preposition כִּי, *with*, is omitted in the Hebrew; but our translators have very properly supplied it, which makes it agree with the Septuagint and Syriac versions.

6. *Set thou a wicked man over him, and let Satan stand at his right hand.*—Some commentators render this verse, 'Set thou a wicked man over him as judge, and let an adversary stand at his right hand.' That is, 'let an adversary, or accuser, take that station, which an advocate usually occupies.' Bp. Horne and others would render the verbs in this psalm to the end of ver. 20, in the future tense, and consider the Psalmist as uttering predictions, instead of imprecations. But Dr. Sykes, observing that these curses are pronounced against one person only, very ingeniously conjectures, that David himself is the object of them, and that the language here recorded is that of his enemies. (See ver. 28.) In order to support this interpretation, we have only to supply the word *saying* after ver. 5, which, in the poetical parts of Scripture, is frequently understood. See ver. 28.

Some persons, not satisfied with this exposition, think that David's enemies are thus devoted under the person of the traitor Judas; and that Doëg, or Ahithophel, and others, are the individual objects of the Psalmist's execration. It is of impor-

tance to remark, that St. Peter, Acts i. 20, applies the expression, 'And let another take his office,' to the traitor, Judas.

Let me observe, says Merrick, that the verbs of the imperative mood, *γενηθῆτω* and *εἴω*, in the former part of St. Peter's quotation, (which is taken from the 69th Psalm) and *λαβοι*, of the optative, in the latter, are very unfavorable to the opinion of those critics, who would render the forms of imprecation, which occur in the psalms, in the future tense, as predictions only of the judgments to be inflicted on the sinner. The offence, which that opinion aims at removing, may, perhaps, be sufficiently obviated by the following considerations:—When a Being of infinite wisdom and mercy wills the infliction of any punishment, as absolutely necessary to the vindication of his honor, it is our duty to will it also. When we pray that the will of God may be done in earth as it is in heaven, we must be understood to pray that every event which can contribute to his glory may take place; and, consequently, that all his acts, whether of mercy or of justice, may have their full effect: our prayer then must comprehend every future instance of vengeance, which God shall determine to exercise; and, could we know with certainty on what persons his vengeance would fall, our petition that the divine will may be done must still be continued without reserve, or limitation, and must therefore, by implication at least, extend to their punishment. There is no inconvenience in supposing an inspired writer, at the same time that he foretels the punishments, which God has absolutely determined to inflict on any particular persons, to have been directed to express his own desire, (a desire which it was his duty to entertain) that the measures which God sees necessary to the support of his laws may be accomplished.

7. *Let his prayer become sin.*—According to D'Arvieux, when an Arab wanted a favor of the emir, the way was to apply to the secretary, who drew up a decree according to the request of the party. If the emir granted the favor, he printed his seal upon it; if not, he returned it torn to the petitioner. Sir John Chardin confirms this account, and applies it with great propriety to the illustration of Is. x. 1, 'Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees, and to the writers that write grievousness.' The manner, says Sir John, of writing the royal acts and ordinances, hath a relation to this. They are always drawn up according to the request: the first minister, or he whose office it is, writes on the side of it, 'according to the king's will,' and from thence it is sent to the secretary of state, who draws up the order in form.—See *Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 386,

The petition, spoken of in this verse, does not seem to be a prayer to God, says Street, but the request of the accuser to the wicked judge. Thus, the adversary, *יָשׁוּעַ*, 'produceth wickedness,' or a wicked decree, and 'his petition to the wicked judge is for that which is sinful.'

He thinks that it is the adversary, *יָשׁוּעַ*, against whom the dreadful evils which follow are prophetically denounced, and the prediction is applied to Judas by St. Peter. The passage, as quoted, Acts i. 20, tallies exactly with the Septuagint, and is an imprecation; but St. Peter speaks of it as a prophecy, of which he and the rest of the apostles had seen a completion. St. Peter, therefore, it is probable, quoted the original Hebrew words, and those were inserted by the historian; but, afterward, some copyist substituted the Septuagint version of them.

The other passage, cited by St. Peter, *γεννηθήτω ἡ ἐπαυλις αὐτῆς ἐρημος, καὶ μὴ ἐσὼ ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν αὐτῇ*, might have been quoted in Hebrew also, from a passage which has been lost out of this psalm; for it does not agree with the Septuagint version, nor with the Hebrew of Ps. lxxix. 25, from which it has usually been supposed to be taken: and the possibility of a whole verse being lost, or maliciously suppressed, is sufficiently evinced by the whole tenth verse of this psalm being omitted in the Syriac version, and the pronouns being altered from the third person singular to the third person plural throughout the psalm in that translation. See Dr. Randolph's note on Acts i. 20.—*Street.*

13. *Let their name.*—The Septuagint, with more than fifty MSS., and some copies of the Chaldee, have, 'Let his name.'

18. *Like oil into his bones.*—There is nothing more pernicious to a naked bone than to put oil, or any other moisture, on it. It is said to cause exquisite pain, and to render it carious. By 'water,' in this verse, Houbigant is of opinion, that there is an allusion to the waters of jealousy mentioned Numb. v. 17. 18.

20. *Let this be the reward of mine adversaries.*—It may be objected, that in this verse David seems to make these curses his own: but as there is no word here expressive of a wish in the Hebrew, the clause, perhaps, should be rendered, 'This is the behaviour of mine adversaries, with respect to Jehovah,' or, 'before Jehovah.'—*Dr. Kennicott.*

23. *Like the shadow when it declineth.*—Like the shadows of terrestrial objects towards sun-set, lengthening every instant, and growing fainter as they lengthen, and in the instant

that they shoot to an unmeasurable length, disappearing.—See *Bp. Horsley*.

23. *Tossed up and down as the locust.*—The swarms of locusts are so numerous in Barbary, that they fly in the air like a succession of clouds. When the wind blows briskly, so that the swarms are crowded by others, and thrown one upon another, we have a lively idea of this comparison of the Psalmist, of being ‘tossed up and down,’ &c.—*Dr. Shaw*.

PSALM CX. It is universally agreed, that this psalm was composed by David; and it seems to be almost as universally agreed, that he speaks not of himself at all in it, but directly of the Messiah. This is the more remarkable, because in most, if not in all the other psalms, where he prophesies of our Saviour, there is an obvious meaning, if not throughout the psalm, yet in several parts of it, which relates to some particular occasion, some passage or other in David’s history; and those psalms are to be understood of Christ in a secondary sense, though not less evident, and sometimes more so, than the first. But this psalm is wholly to be understood of Christ only.

The ancient Jews themselves understood it thus; and that this was the known and received sense of it in our Saviour’s time, appears from what passed between him and the Pharisees, Matt. xxii. 42, &c. To the same sense St. Peter applies it, Acts ii. 34, 35, and the writer to the Hebrews, ch. i. 13. This is farther clear from the fourth verse; for the priesthood was confined to the line of Aaron, and none of David’s posterity, the Messiah only excepted, was ever entitled to that honor. Nor indeed could any of Aaron’s descendants presume to style themselves ‘priests for ever,’ as our high-priest most literally is. We may therefore say, with *Bp. Patrick*, that this psalm is a very plain prediction of our Saviour’s divinity, his royal dignity, his priesthood, his victories, and triumph.—*Dr. Dodd*.

1. *The Lord said unto my Lord.*—The first Lord is in Hebrew, יהוה, ‘Jehovah,’ or ‘God,’ and the second is אדני, ‘lord.’ It should have been rendered, therefore, ‘Jehovah said to my Lord,’ or, ‘God, the Father, said to God, the Son.’

2. *The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion, &c.*—The eternal God, who hath thus decreed to honor thee, O most mighty prince, will first make Zion feel the power of thy sceptre, and thence extend thy empire over all the earth; where thou shalt prevail over infidelity, idolatry, superstition, and impiety, which will all oppose thy authority.—*Bp. Patrick*.

3. *Thy people shall be willing, &c.*—This verse, as it stands at present in our translation, is scarcely intelligible; yet it is important that the sense of it should be made out, because the

words seem to contain a remarkable prophecy, in which, as Bp. Lowth observes, the exuberant increase of the Gospel, on its first dissemination, is explicitly foretold. Houbigant and others, following the ancient versions, which must have been made from a somewhat different text in the Hebrew, render the latter clause of this verse, 'Before the morning-star have I begotten thee.' This reading is countenanced by sixty-five copies of Dr. Kennicott's collation, and thirty-three of De Rossi's. Street has, 'Thy birth shall be comparable to the dewy dawn,' and Bp. Lowth, 'Beyond the dew of the morning is the dew of thy offspring to thee,' i. e. preferable to the dew, which proceeds from the womb of the morning, as being more copious, and more abundant. (See Prælect. x.) The pronominal לך, in the latter clause of the verse, is omitted in one manuscript, and it is not rendered in any of the ancient versions. Our translators also have not noticed it.

By transposing a word or two, and altering the pointing, which, it should be recollected, is in all ancient languages arbitrary, we may read, 'In the day of thy power, thy people shall be to thee, or shall come to thee, a free-will offering, in the beauty of holiness from the womb: thy offspring shall be more numerous than the dew-drops of the morning.' That the prefix מ sometimes expresses the comparative degree there can be no doubt.—See *Noldius*; or *Taylor*, No. 25.

The former part of the verse will then allude to the voluntary manner, in which parents should bring their infants to the church of Christ by the pure and spiritual rite of baptism, and the latter will indicate, by a beautiful simile, the numerous converts to the Gospel soon after its promulgation. The Hebrew word, נדבת, is rendered, 'a free-will offering,' Deut. xvi. 10. A metaphor derived from the dew is expressive of beauty, fecundity, plenty, and multitude.

6. *He shall wound the heads over many countries.*—The Hebrew word is שׂר, which may here mean, 'the principal person, the leader, or commander,' in the singular number.—*Leigh's Crit. Sacra*.

7. *He shall drink of the brook in the way.*—On the authority of one copy, Street renders, 'He shall appoint thee a leader of many in the way.' See an elaborate comment on this psalm in the appendix to Merrick, No. 6.

Probably there may be an allusion here to the incident recorded Judg. vii. 5, 6; and the meaning may be, that he will shew his alacrity and his zeal, by drinking as the three hundred men did, who followed Gideon in his perilous enterprise.

PSALM CXI. VER. 1. *Praise ye the Lord.*]—The word Hallelujah, i. e. ‘Praise ye the Lord,’ is prefixed, or subjoined, to several of the psalms; and it may sometimes be difficult to say, whether it makes a part of the psalm or not. On this psalm Dr. Hammond thus remarks: ‘What may be observed, and competently proved respecting Ps. cvi, namely, that Hallelujah was no part, but only the title, of it, is applicable to this psalm also, and more that follow, and is here most clearly demonstrable.’ His proof is founded on the alphabetical order of the verses, which would not be preserved, if Hallelujah began it. Bp. Lowth is of the same opinion.—*Merrick.*

PSALM CXII. VER. 7. *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings.*]—Rather, ‘evil report.’ He shall not suffer from the calumny and detraction of the wicked.

8. *Until he see his desire upon his enemies.*]—Rather, ‘when he looks upon his enemies;’ or ‘looks them in the face.’ That the particle **וְ** may be so rendered, see *Noldius*, or *Taylor*.

9. *He hath dispersed.*]—Rather, ‘He hath dispensed, *his riches* understood.’ He hath performed the part of a good steward.

10. *Melt away.*]—Or, ‘pine away with envy.’ Or, this expression may mean, ‘He shall come to poverty and misery.’ See note on Prov. xv. 10.

PSALM CXIII. This psalm and the five following were by the Hebrews called Hallel, or hymns, which they recited at their tables in the new-moons and other feasts, especially in the paschal night, after they had eaten the lamb; concluding it with Hallelujah, to excite all the people of God, especially those who constantly attended in his tabernacle, to praise the gracious providence of the most High, which extends to this lower world, and supplies the wants of all its inhabitants.—*Bp. Patrick.*

PSALM CXIV. VER. 2. *Judah was his sanctuary, &c.*]—God appeared among them by a luminous cloud, the token of his presence, which, having then no peculiar place for its sanctuary, stood over the whole camp of Israel, which he considered as his peculiar kingdom.—*Bp. Patrick.*

The words of the original may only mean, that Judah became a consecrated people, or holy to the Lord.

2. *Israel his dominion.*]—That is, Israel was subject to his dominion; or governed in a peculiar manner by his laws, and honored with his especial favor.

6. *Ye mountains.*]—The mountains here referred to are Horeb and Sinai. Compare Exod. xix. 18; Ps. xxix. 6; lxxviii. 8; and Hab. iii. 6, 10.

PSALM CXV. Dr. Delaney, on a supposition, that by the

‘blind and the lame,’ (2 Sam. v. 6.) are meant the idols which the Jebusites worshipped, supposes this psalm to be a triumphal song for David’s victory over the Jebusites. It is evidently a hymn of humiliation and thanksgiving to God for a victory gained over a heathen people, who put their confidence in idols, and despised the God of David.

2. *Wherefore should the heathen say, &c.*—Rather, ‘Why should the nations have to say, ‘where is now their God? since our God reigns in the heavens, and can do whatsoever he pleaseth.’

9. *O Israel, &c.*—Street supposes that this and the four following verses were sung by a semi-chorus, and translates in the nominative case, ‘The house of Israel trusteth in Jehovah: He is their assistance and defence.’ So also the house of Aaron, &c. Seven copies of Dr. Kennicott’s collation, and thirteen of De Rossi’s, have *בית ישראל*, ‘The house of Israel,’ which reading is supported by all the ancient versions.

11. *Ye that fear the Lord, &c.*—Rather, ‘Let the worshippers of Jehovah trust in Jehovah.’

17. *The dead praise not, &c.*—By ‘the dead’ are most properly characterised the Gentile nations; who having no part in God’s covenant of redemption, but being estranged from Him by their idolatries and wickedness, were to be left for ever in the state of death.—*Peters.*

By ‘the dead’ may be meant the audaciously wicked, the profligate, and miserable. See note on Prov. xv. 10.

PSALM CXVI. This psalm was probably written by David on his deliverance from Absalom’s rebellion; though some think it was composed by Ezra, on the return of the Jews from Babylon. Others are of opinion, that it was written by Hezekiah on recovering from his sickness.

11. *All men are liars.*—‘My former friends and companions are deceitful and perfidious. Instead of confining my accusations to individuals, who deserve censure, I unjustly condemned all.’ If Hezekiah composed this psalm, he may allude in these words to the promise of recovery made to him by the prophet Isaiah, who advised him to apply a lump of figs to the sore. See Is. xxxviii. 21.

13. *I will take the cup of salvation.*—This is an allusion to the drink-offerings, that were made in the eucharistic sacrifices. See Numb. xxviii. 7. This ‘cup of salvation,’ as it is called, was sometimes presented in a solemn manner by the priests in the temple; and sometimes it formed a religious rite in families, on deliverance from any calamity. On those occasions, the husband, or father, drank of the cup first himself, offering a short form of blessing and thanksgiving to

God, and then he presented it in order to all present.—See *Dr. Hammond*.

15. *Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.*]—That is, ‘The Lord will not readily allow the impious to take away the lives of his saints.’ What we consider as ‘precious,’ we naturally watch over and protect. See *Grotius*, and *Rosenmüller*.

PSALM CXVII. 2. *The truth of the Lord.*]—‘Truth, here, as in other places,’ Bp. Horsley observes, ‘is the constancy of God’s favor, and affection.’

PSALM CXVIII. This psalm appears to be an ode composed for some occasion of public thanksgiving, (probably a victory, see verses 10 and 11) and to have been sung partly by the victorious prince, and partly by a train of his attendants, as they went up to worship at the temple. Toward the end are two stanzas, which seem to have been sung by the priests on the arrival of the procession at the gates of the temple; and in answer to the praises of Jehovah, which the princes of his train uttered as they entered it.—*Street*.

Some commentators are of opinion, that this Psalm was originally composed for the Feast of Tabernacles; or, at least, that it was publicly sung on that occasion. See note on Levit. xxiii. 34.

5. *In a large place.*]—‘In a state of liberty,’ opposed to thralldom and restraint.

10—12. *All nations compassed me about, &c.*]—It is familiar with David, says Dr. Delaney, to couch such images in three words, as would in the hands of Homer be the materials of his noblest, most enlarged, and dignified descriptions. We have two in this verse, (12) ‘They,’ that is, all nations, ‘compassed me about like bees,’ and ‘they are quenched as the fire of thorns.’ The reader has here, in miniature, two of the finest images in Homer, which, if his curiosity demands to be gratified, he will find illustrated and enlarged in the second book of the *Iliad*. The first of them stands thus in Pope’s translation, ver. 209, &c.

‘The following host,
 Pour’d forth in millions, darken all the coast.
 As from some rocky cleft the shepherd sees,
 Clustering in heaps on heaps, the driving bees;
 Rolling and blackening, swarms succeeding swarms
 With deeper murmurs, and more hoarse alarms,
 Dusky they spread, a close-embodied crowd,
 And o’er the vale descends the living cloud;
 So, from the tents and ships,’ &c.

The next is at verse 534, &c.

‘ As on some mountain, through the lofty grove,
The crackling flames ascend, and blaze above;
The fires, expanding as the winds arise,
Shoot their long beams, and kindle half the skies:
So from the polish’d arms, and brazen shields,
A gleamy splendor flash’d along the fields.
Not less their number,’ &c.

The reader will observe, that here the idea of an army’s resembling a flaming fire, is common both to Homer and David: but the idea of that fire being quenched, when the army was conquered, is peculiar to the Psalmist.—Life of David, book ii. ch. 9.

13. *Thou hast thrust sore at me, &c.*—On the authority of the Septuagint, Vulgate, and Syriac versions, which have the verb in the first person singular, Street renders this verse, ‘I stumbled greatly, as if I were falling, but Jehovah helped me.’

19. *The gates of righteousness.*—A poetical form of expression for ‘the gates of the temple,’ or ‘the tabernacle,’ which was the appointed place for the public and solemn performance of religious duties. If, as it is supposed, this psalm was sung in parts, in a public procession to the tabernacle up mount Zion, the meaning here is, ‘Now that we are advanced in our procession to the castle of mount Zion, open to me those sacred gates, ye Levites, who are entrusted with being porters there, that I may go through them into the courts of the tabernacle of God, and there praise Him for his great favors to me.’ The Levites, or porters, are supposed to sing the next verse, in the passage through the gate. Dr. Waterland in the 20th verse reads, ‘This is the gate,’ &c.

22. *The stone which the builders refused.*—The commonwealth of Israel, and the church of God, are here and elsewhere in Scripture compared to a building, of which, as the people are the stones and the materials, so the princes and rulers are the builders, whose office it was to erect, support, and improve the building, and to use their wisdom and power in choosing fit materials for the several parts and purposes of the building, and in the rejection of what was unprofitable, or inconvenient. These master-builders rejected David as an obscure, treacherous, and rebellious person, fit to be not only laid aside, and thrown away, but also to be crushed to pieces. So, also, their successors rejected Christ, as an enemy to Moses, a friend to sinners, and a blasphemer against God, and therefore deserving of death.—Poole.

27. *Bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar.*]—The Septuagint and Vulgate read, ‘keep the feast with thick boughs (brought as far as) to the horns of the altar.’ So also, Houbigant. There was no such custom as tying the sacrifice that was to be killed, to the horns of the altar.—*Hammond, and Bos.*

Fenwick renders this verse,

‘God is Jehovah, light from him descends.
Come, let the sacrifice be bound,
The blood be sprinkled on the altar’s horns.’

PSALM CXIX. This psalm, of which, Bp. Patrick asserts, David was confessedly the author, is written with great art; for it is not only divided into as many parts as there are letters in the Hebrew alphabet, but each of these parts consists of eight verses. In the original, every line also begins with the same letter that forms the title of the part. For instance, all the eight verses in the first part, termed Aleph, begin with an aleph, or *a*; and those in the second with a beth, or *b*, &c. Hence, this psalm is styled, in the great Masora, the ‘great alphabet.’ But, notwithstanding the pains which the author must have taken in the composition, it appears, from several passages, that it was written during the persecution of Saul. It must, however, be observed that David had many intervals of rest in that period. These, it is natural to think, he employed in meditating on the goodness and mercy of the Almighty, the excellency of his laws, and the happiness of those who make them the conduct of their lives: and in these meditations the psalm under consideration seems to have been composed.—*Bp. Patrick.*

The acrostic, or alphabetical poetry of the Hebrews, was certainly intended to assist the memory; and was confined altogether to those compositions, which consisted of detached maxims, or sentiments, without any express order, or connexion. The whole of this long psalm is of this description. The chief subjects are the excellence of God’s laws, and the happiness of those who observe them. The Psalmist seems to try in how many shapes, and with what copiousness and variety of expression, he could utter and adorn a few fundamental ideas on these two topics, interspersed with pious aspirations for comfort, instruction, and the divine protection.

Michaëlis very justly remarks, that, except the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and the xxxviiiith Psalm, none of the alphabetic poems of the Hebrews rise in any degree above mediocrity; a certain indication, that, however useful this kind of discrimina-

tion might be on some occasions, in assisting the memory of children, and in attracting the notice of the vulgar, yet such minute arts mark the decay of genuine poetry, and are in general inconsistent with true genius. These remarks tend to prove, that the cxixth Psalm was composed long after the reign of David. See introductory note to Ps. xxv.

20. *My soul breaketh.*—‘My soul is worn with pinings for thy judgments always.’—*Street.*

The translation of this verse in our liturgy is, ‘My soul breaketh out for the very fervent desire that it hath alway unto thy judgments.’

49. *Remember the word.*—The ancient versions all supply the pronominal adjective, and read, ‘Remember *thy* word.’

56. *This I had, &c.*—‘Thus was it with me, for I kept thy ordinances.’—*Street.*

The Syriac version reads, ‘And I was comforted, because I kept thy commandments.’

70. *Their heart is as fat as grease.*—This passage is rightly translated in the Greek, Latin, and Syriac; ‘Their heart is curdled like milk;’ i. e. grown sour and disagreeable. It is very improperly rendered in our liturgy, ‘as fat as brawn,’ because swine’s flesh not being eaten among the Jews, they could have no knowledge of brawn.—*Pilkington.*

It does not follow that they could have no knowledge of it, because it formed no part of their food. They certainly were acquainted with hogs, from their near neighbours the Gadarenes, (see Matt. viii. 30.) and they might have made brawn in large quantities for exportation, if not for their own use. The Jews indeed would regard it with disgust; but this makes the simile more striking and applicable.

83. *I am become like a bottle in the smoke.*—Among the utensils of the Arabs may be mentioned the ‘leathern bottles’ which they have, and out of which, la Roque tells us, they drink, when a pitcher is not at hand.

These are very uncouth drinking-vessels, in comparison of such as were anciently used in the courts of princes, agreeably to what we learn, 1 Kings x. 21, where we are told the magnificence of Solomon suffered no drinking-vessels, in his palace, that were not of gold. There were not any even of silver, as this metal was not valued in his days; whereas, in the preceding reigns, cups of silver, as well as of gold, were used in the royal houses. And, to the difference betwixt those vessels of silver, or of gold, and these goat-skin bottles, the Psalmist seems here to refer. See note on Josh. ix. 4.

One may easily conceive that such a kind of bottle, if placed

in the smoke, i. e. near the fire, would soon become scorched and dried up, and lose all its strength. The same pining away and wasting, which was spoken of in the 82nd verse, is here described in figurative language.—*Street*.

91. *They continue.*—That is, ‘heaven and earth.’ Two copies however have, ‘it continues,’ in the singular number; and instead of, ‘for all are thy servants,’ we may read, ‘for the whole universe obeyeth thee.’

96. *I have seen an end of all perfection.*—‘To every study I see a limit.’—*Street*.

Green renders the first clause, ‘I have seen bounds and an end to every thing.’ The meaning is, ‘I have seen that all human wisdom is limited; but that of thy commandments is infinite.’

107. *Quicken me.*—That is, ‘revive me, give me new life and spirits.’

109. *In my hand.*—The Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions read, ‘in thy hand;’ but there is no necessity for alteration, as the expression denotes a state of constant danger. See 1 Sam. xxviii. 21; and Job xiii. 14.

126. *It is time for thee, Lord, to work.*—The Syriac and Arabic versions read, ‘It is time to worship the Lord.’ Street thinks that the Hebrew word לעשות, here means to offer sacrifice. It is so used Levit. ix. 7, 22; Numb. xv. 8, 14. See Taylor on the verb עשה. We may then read, in harmony with the versions, ‘It is time to offer sacrifice to thee, O Lord, because they have made void thy law.’

128. *Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right.*—Street, following the authority of the Septuagint, renders this clause, ‘Therefore I guide myself by all thine ordinances.’ In our liturgy, it is, ‘Therefore hold I straight all thy commandments.’

130. *The entrance of thy words.*—Rather, ‘the opening,’ or ‘exposition of thy words.’

139. *My zeal hath consumed me.*—‘With jealousy I was dumb.’—*Michaëlis*, after *Symmachus*. But all the ancient versions favor our present translation. See the parallel texts, and compare Ps. lxix. 9.

147. *I prevented, &c.*—That is, ‘I anticipated;’ or, ‘I rose before the dawning of the morning.’

148. *The night watches.*—The Septuagint and Vulgate read, ‘The day-break,’ or ‘morning watch.’

165. *And nothing shall offend them.*—Rather, ‘And nothing shall cause them to stumble, or fall.’

PSALM CXX. title. *A song of degrees.*—This should have been rendered, ‘A psalm of, or for the ascent.’

Fifteen psalms have this title. They seem to have been composed to be sung in processions either of the king and his court, or of the people, when they went up to worship in the temple. We are told, 1 Kings x. 5, that one of the things which the queen of Sheba, admired in the royal state of Solomon, was עלתו אשר יעלה בית יהוה, 'His ascent, by which he went up unto the house of the Lord.' The word המעלות, which is used in the titles of these psalms, is derived from the same root with the word עלה, 'ascent,' which is used in the history.—*Street*.

It is very uncertain why this title is prefixed to this and the fourteen following psalms. The more general opinion seems to be that they were so called, because, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonish captivity, they were sung by the Levites, as they went up the steps, or stairs of the temple. See Ezek. xl. 'As far as one may judge from the general import of the psalms which have this title,' says Mr. Mudge, 'they mean psalms sung on the occasion of the Jews coming up from the country, as they did three times a year, to pay their devotions at Jerusalem.' 'Some,' says Bp. Horsley, 'have the form of prayers, to be used by the worshippers as they ascended the steps; others, of benedictions, with which the worshippers were saluted by the priests.'

The English argument asserts, that the present psalm is a prayer of David against Doeg, when his calumnies reduced him to the necessity of taking refuge in the country of the Arabians, expressed in the fifth verse by 'the tents of Kedar.' The Syriac title intimates, that it was a prayer used by the Jews during their captivity in Babylon. Both these opinions may be reconciled by supposing that, though the psalm was originally composed by David, on account of the calumnies of Doeg; yet it was so well adapted to the situation of the captive Jews, that they made use of it as descriptive of the distress which they groaned under while in Babylon. See title of Psalm cxxxiii.

4. *Coals of juniper.*—It is difficult to determine, with certainty, why 'coals of juniper' are particularly mentioned. Some interpreters have ascribed to them the power of long preserving fire; others have mentioned the fragrance of the wood: but these explanations are not very satisfactory. If coals of juniper were thought, in the days of the Psalmist, to have possessed the power of driving away venomous animals, (as Dioscorides asserts was the prevailing notion of his times) the thought might possibly be this; 'Oh, what shall be done to thee that possessest a tongue of falshood? Thou shalt be given up to the

arrows of the mighty, which shall pierce through thee with deadly force, after thou shalt be made to appear in thy true light; as poisonous animals are forced out of their lurking-holes, and brought to view, by the energy of the coals of juniper, and then destroyed.'—*Harmer*, vol. iv. p. 354.

5. Some render this verse; 'Woe is me, that my sojourning is so long protracted, while I dwell in the tents of Kedar!'

Houbigant, Dr. Waterland, and many other commentators, think that ours is the proper rendering. Mesech, in the Chaldee and Syriac languages, signifies 'a skin,' and is here supposed to denote a place in Arabia, so called, perhaps, from the skins with which the Arabians covered their tents. 'The barbarous people who lived in that part of the country were termed Scenitæ, because they continued in tents. Kedar is the name of another place, or territory, in that part of Arabia; so called from Kedar the son of Ishmael, (Gen. xxv. 13) whose posterity settled in that country. This may either be understood literally, of David; or metaphorically, of dwelling among people as much averse to peace, as the wild Arabs, who lead a life of rapine and plunder.

PSALM CXXI. This psalm seems to have been written by David, when he was obliged to fly from Jerusalem, to avoid the army of his rebellious son. It will appear much more intelligible, if, like several others, we suppose it to have been sung alternately by the king and priests; David taking the first, second, and fourth verses, and a chorus of priests the rest.—See *Street*.

1. *Unto the hills.*]—Rather, 'above,' or 'beyond the hills,' for so the preposition *לְ* sometimes signifies.—See *Noldius*.

'Hills' were, and still are, considered as military stations of security and defence.

5, 6. *The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand; the sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.*]—It appears from the carvings at Persepolis, that umbrellas were very anciently used by the Eastern princes. Charms, we have reason to believe, were at least as ancient. May we not, with some degree of probability, suppose then that this psalm refers to these umbrellas; where the response, made probably by the ministers of the sanctuary, to the declaration of the king in the two first verses, reminded him that Jehovah would be to him all that heathen princes hoped for, as to defence and honor, from their royal umbrellas and their sacred charms, but hoped for in vain as to them? This probably is 'the shade' which furnished the Psalmist with the allusion in the text.—*Harmer*, vol. ii. p. 459.

This criticism will be thought by many too minute. By the metaphor of 'shade' we may here understand the general ideas of comfort, refreshment, and protection. By 'on the right hand,' we may suppose a reference is meant to the scorching heat of the south; because, unless the contrary is mentioned, a person was always considered by the Hebrews, with respect to position, as facing the east. The latter part of the verse either refers to the chilling cold of the night, occasioned by the copious dews which fall in those countries; or else it is an allusion to some old astrological notion. The sun being considered as the regent of day, and the moon of night, the general sense of the text is, that God would defend him from the injuries that are incident to both.

8. *The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in.*]
—That is, 'He shall cause thee to prosper in all thy undertakings.'

PSALM CXXII. This psalm is in the title ascribed to David, and it is truly worthy of him. From the beginning, it plainly appears, that when he had deposited the ark in its proper place, and so far finished the buildings, that the city was capable of receiving the people, who should come up to celebrate their first festival there, he had been informed, that they expressed a general desire of ascending to it, and visiting the house of the Lord; a privilege which they were seldom sure of obtaining before. 'I was glad,' &c. ver. 1. When they were actually come up to the city, and had just entered the gate, they are represented as crying out with triumph, in the height of their surprise and joy, when from the gate they behold the buildings which presented themselves to their view: 'Jerusalem is built! 'Tis a city well compact within itself, stately, beautiful, and regular!' The description, as it were, places us under the very gate, and the houses and palaces rise almost conspicuous to our view.

What added to their joy, when they beheld the city, was the presence of the ark in it, the courts of judicature, and the several other circumstances mentioned in the psalm. How natural and affecting also is the sudden change from admiration to devotion, breathing out in ardent prayers for the peace and prosperity of a city, which so many considerations united to endear to them, and render them solicitous for its safety! The Psalmist closes this divine ode with a solemn assurance to his people, whom he styles 'his brethren and companions,' that for their sakes, and the high reverence he bore to the house of God, he would himself both offer prayers for their prosperity, and, in

the whole of his government, endeavour to secure the tranquillity of the city.—*Dr. Chandler.*

3. *Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact.*]—Mudge renders it, ‘As a city that is placed in the centre of union.’ Jerusalem, the great seat and centre of religion and justice, was the centre of union to all the tribes; the palace was the centre of the city, and the tabernacle of the palace.

4. *The testimony of Israel.*]—By ‘the testimony of Israel,’ we are to understand ‘the ark.’ See *Exod.* xvi. 34; xxvi. 33, 34; *Levit.* xvi. 13; and *Num.* xvii. 4.

PSALM CXXIII. Bp. Patrick thinks that this psalm was composed during that period of distress, when the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh to besiege Hezekiah in Jerusalem. He observes that Hezekiah desired Isaiah to lift up his prayer for the remnant that was left, *2 Kings* xix. 4; *Isaiah* xxxvii. 4. Accordingly, we read, *2 Chron.* xxxii. 20, that both he and Hezekiah cried unto the Lord; when we may suppose, that Isaiah lift up his eyes to heaven, and repeated the words of this psalm.

The change of performers is here very evident. The pronoun in the first distich is in the first person singular; but in the rest of the psalm, the first person plural is used.—*Street.*

2. *Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hands of their masters, &c.*]—This alludes to a custom, says Sir J. Chardin, among all the great in the East, especially in Asia Minor, I mean the Turks; there every order is given by a sign of the hands. From hence the mutes of the seraglio. A similar practice prevails in the Persian court. This is the same with the first of the four explanations that are given in Poole’s Synopsis: but did the Psalmist mean to represent the Israelites as saying, they would attentively observe all the orders that God should give them, and set themselves to obey them, till the affliction they groaned under should be removed? Was their attention then to cease?

The true explanation, perhaps, is this: ‘As a slave, ordered by a master, or mistress, to be chastised for a fault, turns his, or her, imploring eyes to that superior, till that motion of the hand appears, which puts an end to the bitterness that is felt; so our eyes are put up to thee, our God, till thy hand shall give the signal for putting an end to our sorrows: for our enemies, O Lord! we are sensible, are only executing thy orders, and chastening us according to thy pleasure.’

The following extract from *De la Motraye* (vol. i. p. 249) renders this more clear: ‘One can hardly imagine the respect,

civility, and serious modesty, that is used among them, (the Eastern ladies) when they are visited by any one; as I have been informed by some ladies of the Franks, who have been with several. No nuns, or novices, pay more deference to their abbess, or superior, than the maid-slaves to their mistresses: they are waited on, as are likewise their female visitors, with a surprising order and diligence, even at the least wink of the eye, or motion of the fingers; and that in a manner not perceptible to strangers, as I have said of the men elsewhere.'—*Harmer*.

PSALM CXXIV. What the particular deliverance was which is celebrated in this psalm we are not informed; but it was so well adapted to the circumstances of the Jews, on their return from the Babylonish captivity, that the Levites, we are told, constantly used it to celebrate that happy event.

PSALM CXXV. Dr. Delaney supposes this psalm to have been made by David just before the attack of the strong-holds of Sion; and in this light he considers the Psalmist as answering the objections, which we may imagine were made in a council of war held on this occasion, from the great strength of the place, and religiously reminding his people, that under the good providence of God, they might be confident of surmounting all difficulties.—*Life of David*, book ii. chap. 6.

2. *As the mountains are round, &c.*]—This allusion to the situation of Jerusalem expresses very properly the divine protection, which defended the Israelites on every side from the attacks of their enemies. The short description which Mr. Sandys has given of it, may help us to conceive this matter more clearly. 'This city,' says he, 'is seated on a rocky mountain, every way to be ascended, except a little on the north, with steep ascents and deep valleys naturally fortified: for the most part, it is environed with other mountains not far removed, as if placed in the midst of an amphitheatre; for, on the east, is mount Olivet, separated from the city by the valley of Jehoshaphat, which also encircles part of the north. On the south, is the mountain of Offiner, interposed with the valley of Gehinnom; and, on the west, it was formerly fenced with the valley of Gihon, and the mountains adjoining.'

3. *For the rod.*]—Rather, 'for the tribe,' &c. The Hebrew word שֵׁבֶט means 'a tribe,' as well as a 'rod,' or 'sceptre.' But it is better, perhaps, to consider 'rod' here as the symbol of sovereign and despotic power. See *Merrick*.

5. *Peace.*]—The word 'peace' seems to have comprehended, in the estimation of the ancient Hebrews, every kind of prosperity, happiness, and virtuous enjoyment. See note on Gen. xxix. 6; and compare Ps. cxxii. 8; cxxviii. 6.

PSALM CXXVI. VER. 1. *When the Lord, &c.*]—That is, ‘When the royal proclamation was issued by Cyrus allowing us to return to our own country after a long captivity, (see Ezra i. 2, 3.) we could scarcely believe it, and were like those who are only indulging dreams of happiness.’ Some would read, with the Chaldee paraphrast, ‘We were like sick men restored to health.’ Two or three of the ancient versions have, ‘We were comforted.’

4. *Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south*]—This image is taken from the torrents in the deserts to the south of Judea; in Idumea, Arabia Petræa, &c. a mountainous country. These torrents were constantly dried up in the summer, (see Job vi. 15 to 18) and as constantly returned after the rainy season, and filled again their deserted channels. The point of the comparison seems to be, that, as these torrents, which yearly leave their beds, return and fill them again; so the Jews, who had left their country desolate, now flowed again into it.—See *Bp. Lowth*, in *Merrick’s Annot.*

6. *He that goeth forth, &c.*]—The sense and application of the allusion appear to be this: ‘As the poor husbandman, who, with a heavy heart, throws his seed into the ground, in a time of scarcity, and in an ungenial season, expecting little or no crop from it, yet frequently finds his corn springing up plentifully, far beyond his expectation, and at the time of harvest goes home loaded with sheaves; so shall this small handful of people, who are come to plant themselves here again, and have laid the foundation of the temple, with a great mixture of sadness and tears, (see Ezra iii. 12) then shout for joy, to see so great an increase of their brethren, and this pious work, by their means, brought to perfection.’—*Dr. Dodd.*

PSALM CXXVII. The Hebrew prefix ל, which, in the title, is translated *for*, might have been rendered *of*; and then this psalm would have been ascribed to Solomon. (See *Buxtorf*, *Thes. Gram.* p. 362.) This is the more probable, says *Bp. Patrick*, as it is a commentary on a pious maxim of his, often repeated in the book of Proverbs, namely, that it is in vain to attempt any thing, if the Lord doth not prosper the design; teaching us in all our ways to acknowledge him, and not presume that it is in our power to direct the issue as we please: ‘for though a man’s heart deviseth his way, yet it is the Lord that directeth his steps.’ Prov. xvi. 9.

2. *For so he giveth his beloved sleep.*]—It should have been rendered, ‘At a time when he giveth sleep to his beloved;’ that is, early in the morning, and late at night. See *Noldius*, or *Parkhurst*, on the particle ל.

4. *Children of the youth, &c.*]—These are opposed to the children of old age; and of the former it is frequently observed, that they are the strongest, being, as Jacob says of Reuben, ‘his might, the beginning of his strength;’ and of such it is here said, ‘they are as arrows in the hand of a mighty man;’ i. e. able to defend their parent against the attempts of his enemies, as well as weapons can be. ‘His quiver full of them,’ means his house as full of children, as the quiver of a mighty man is of arrows.—*Dr. Dodd.*

Some may think, that by ‘his quiver,’ a very natural, but more recondite meaning is expressed.

5. *But they shall speak with.*]—Rather, ‘When they shall plead.’ It is a forensic term, and ‘the gate’ is taken for a court of judicature.

PSALM CXXVIII. VER. 2. *For thou, &c.*]—This change of person indicates, that the psalm was to be sung by different performers. See also verse 5.

3. *Thy children like olive-plants, &c.*]—Thetis, in Homer, says of her son, Achilles, Iliad xviii,

‘Like some fair olive, by my careful hand
He grew, he flourish’d, and adorn’d the land.’—*Pope.*

PSALM CXXIX. VER. 3. *The plowers plowed upon my back.*]—These are strong, metaphorical expressions, describing the effects of severe, public scourgings. The Hebrew expression למעניות instead of ‘their furrows,’ at the end of the verse, might have been rendered ‘their weals,’ which is still used, in our western counties, to denote the effects of a severe stroke on the skin, and also ‘green ridges,’ for the purpose of separating distinct portions of land in common fields.

7. *The mower.*]—Rather, ‘the reaper.’

7. *His bosom.*]—Rather, ‘his arms,’ or ‘his grasp;’ for so the word חֲצִנֵּי may signify. See Is. xlix. 22, and Castell’s Lex. Hept. The same word, which we render ‘bosom,’ sometimes signifies, also, the folds of the outer garment; or the lap which women make of their aprons, or mantles, and in which they receive and carry things. See Nehemiah v. 13; and Luke vi. 38.

PSALM CXXX. VER. 1. *Out of the depths.*]—Deep afflictions are here meant.

4. *That thou mayest be feared.*]—The fear of God is supposed to comprehend not only reverence and awe, but love, obedience, resignation, and praise.

6. *Watch for the morning.*]—‘My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that observe the morning watch; which they

looked for, that they might offer the morning sacrifice.'—*Targum*.

The custom alluded to by the Targumist is mentioned Exod. xxx. 7, 'And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning; when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it.'—*Street*.

There may be some allusion, also, to sentinels, who, at an early hour of the morning, wait with anxiety to be relieved. In illustrating the poetry of David, it should not be forgotten that he was a military man, and that great part of his life was passed in camps, or at the head of armies.

PSALM CXXXI. VER. 1. *Nor mine eyes lofty.*]—This is one of the many physiognomical expressions that are to be found in the Holy Scriptures, and denotes arrogance and pride.

PSALM CXXXII. This whole psalm seems to have been composed and sung at the solemnity of bringing up the ark, expressing the holy joy and triumph of the event. 'We at Ephratah,' i. e. Bethlehem, and other places about Jerusalem, 'heard of it,' that it was at Jair, or Kirjath-jearim; and 'we found it' there and fetched it up. The 8th verse seems likewise to confirm this conjecture. 'Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength.'—*Dr. Wall*.

9. *Thy saints.*]—By 'saints' here, and likewise ver. 16, we may understand the Levites, whose office it was to sing praises unto the Lord in the daily service of the temple.

10. *Turn not away the face of thine anointed.*]—That is, 'Reject him not; manifest no displeasure against him.'

14. *This is my rest for ever.*]—The word 'saying' must be here understood, as forming a necessary introduction to this verse and the following.

17. *The horn of David, &c.*]—These are metaphors that are frequently used. The meaning is, that David should ever have, in Jerusalem, a horn flourishing, and a light, or lamp, burning. A horn is an emblem of sovereignty. As one horn dropped off, another was to spring up; and his lamp, or family, should never be extinguished. This is an allusion to the ever-burning lamp of the temple.—*Mudge*.

PSALM CXXXIII. This psalm is one of the fifteen, which are entitled, 'Odes of the Ascensions:' that is, which were sung when the people came up either to worship in Jerusalem, at the annual festivals; or, perhaps, when they returned from the Babylonish captivity. The return is certainly called 'the ascension, or coming up from Babylon,' Ezra vii. 9. And the old Syriac translator, who explains the subject of the Psalms by apposite titles, refers to that circumstance almost all the

psalms which bear this inscription; some of them indeed without sufficient foundation, but many of them manifestly have relation to it. Theodoret indiscriminately explains them all as relating to the Babylonish captivity; and thus illustrates the title: 'Odes of the Ascensions.' Theodotion calls them 'Songs of the Ascensions;' but the title of Symmachus and Aquila is, 'On the returns.' It is evident that the coming up, and the ascent, relate to the return of the people from the Babylonish captivity. Theod. in Ps. cxx. But we must not omit remarking also, that, both in the Old and New Testament, there is scarcely a phrase more common than 'to go up to Jerusalem, to go up to the feast,' &c. (See John vii. 8.) And observe, above the rest, Ps. cxxii, which can scarcely be applied to any thing but the celebration of some festival.—*Bp. Lowth.*

1. *To dwell.*—Interpreters have all rendered this word שבת, as though it were derived from ישב, 'to dwell.' But I take it to come from שבת, 'to rest,' or 'keep the Sabbath.'—*Street.*

2. *It is like the precious ointment, &c.*—The manner of performing the ceremony of anointing the high-priest has been particularly transmitted to us by the rabbinical writers. They inform us, that the oil was poured on the top of the priest's head, which was bare, so plentifully, as to run down his face upon his beard, to 'the collar' not 'the lower skirts,' of his robe. It has been said, that at the consecration of the high-priest, the unction was repeated seven days together: an opinion founded on Exod. xxix. 29, 30.—See *Jennings's Jewish Antiq.* vol. i. p. 210.

3. *As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion, &c.*—Unity among brethren, beginning from the king, is like the dew of heaven, which, falling first on the highest summit of Hermon, refreshing and enriching wherever it falls, naturally descends to Sion, a little lower; and thence even to the humble valleys.—*Dr. Delaney.*

PSALM CXXXIV. This psalm was probably the cry of the watch in the temple during the night, as Bp. Lowth has observed in his note on Isaiah lxii. 6; but from the plural form of the addresses in the first part of it, and the singular form of the pronoun 'thee' in the second part of it, I am rather inclined to think, that one was sung by the captain of the guard, and the other by the guard, than that it was performed, as Bp. Lowth supposes, by two different divisions of the watch.—*Street.*

PSALM CXXXV. This seems to have been the morning hymn, which the præcentor called upon the Levites to sing at the opening of the gates of the temple, as the foregoing was sung at the shutting of them in the evening.—*Bp. Patrick.*

7. *He maketh lightnings, &c.*]—Russell says, (p. 154) a night seldom passes at Aleppo without lightning in the north-west quarter; but it is not attended with thunder. When it appears in the west, or south-west points, it is a sure sign of approaching rain; this lightning is often followed by thunder. Thus ‘God maketh the lightnings for the rain. When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens;’ and, as these refreshing showers are preceded by squalls of wind, ‘He bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures.’ Jer. li. 16.—*Harmer*, vol. i. 104, 106.

7. *For the rain.*]—It is in Hebrew *לַמֶּטֶר*, and should have been rendered, ‘with the rain;’ unless we suppose an hypallage, and read, ‘rain for the lightnings;’ i. e. to prevent them from causing extensive conflagration.

14. *The Lord will judge, &c.*]—‘The Lord will do justice to his people, and have compassion on his servants.’—*Houbigant*, and *Mudge*.

PSALM CXXXVI. This psalm, like the former, is a commemoration of the goodness of the Lord, especially of the wonderful works, which he had done for Israel. The form of acknowledgment, ‘for his mercy endureth for ever,’ so often repeated in this psalm, was prescribed by David, to be used continually in the divine service, 1 Chron. xvi. 41; and accordingly followed by Solomon, when he dedicated the temple, 2 Chron. vii. 3, 6, and by Jehoshaphat, when, by the encouragement of a prophet, he went out against a prodigious army, at the head of a small number of forces, 2 Chron. xx. 21.—*Bp. Patrick*.

PSALM CXXXVII. This melancholy song, says *Mudge*, was composed by one of the captives on their coming to Babylon. The author remembers his country with great affection, and the enemies of it, particularly Edom and Babylon, with much resentment. It has been thought, that Jeremiah composed this beautiful elegy, and sent it to the captives of Babylon, on hearing the scorn, with which their insulting enemies treated them in that strange land; which, he here foretels, God would severely punish by the hands of some other cruel people, who would shew them as little mercy as they had shewn the Israelites.

1. *By the rivers of Babylon.*]—St. Chrysostom thinks, that the Jews, at the beginning of their captivity, were dispersed along several rivers in the country, and not suffered to dwell in the towns of the province of Babylon. It is supposed by some, that they were employed in draining the marshy parts of the country.

5. *Her cunning.*]—These words are supplied by our translators, and by ‘cunning,’ we are to understand skill in playing on the harp. ‘A cunning man,’ in the time of our translators was what we should now call ‘a skilful man.’ See note on 2 Chron. ii. 7. Perhaps it would have been better to have given the text a more general sense, and rendered the original by, ‘Let my right hand lose its power.’

PSALM CXXXVIII. VER. 1. *Before the gods.*]—Rather, ‘Before princes, and the rulers of the earth.’ The Hebrew word is אֱלֹהִים, which may be rendered ‘gods:’ the preposition נֶגַד may be translated ‘in opposition to.’—See *Noldius*, or *Parkhurst*.

PSALM CXXXIX. VER. 3. *Thou compassed my path.*—זָרִית. This verb has not elsewhere the sense of encompassing, unless it be 2 Sam. xxii. 40, where probably וַתִּזְרֵנִי should be וַתִּתְּנֵנִי, as in the corresponding psalm. ‘Winnowing’ would sound uncouth; but Mudge has hit upon the word ‘sifted,’ which, though an idea somewhat different, suits very well. See Abp. Secker’s note on this place, printed with *Merrick’s* version, who should have known, that *Arias Montanus* had given the same interpretation of the word long before.

7, 10. *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? &c.*]—The sentiment in this noble passage is remarkably striking, and the description is truly sublime. To what part of the universe shall I go to avoid thy spirit? or whither shall I flee to avoid thy piercing sight? If I climb up into the heights of heaven, thou art there, enthroned in light. If I go down to the depths of the grave, thou art there, in thy pavilion of darkness. If I retire to the remotest climates of the east, where the morning first takes wing; if, swifter than the darting ray, I pass to the opposite regions of the west, and remain in the uttermost parts of the sea; shall I, in that distant situation, be beyond thy reach, or, by this sudden transition, escape thy notice? So far from it, that, could I transport myself beyond the bounds of creation, I should still be encircled with the immensity of thy essence; or, rather, still be enclosed in the hollow of thy hand.—*Hervey*.

Bp. Lowth is not satisfied with the common interpretation of ver. 9. He thinks that the two members of this distich are opposed to each other, and that a twofold passage is expressed, one to the east, and the other to the west; so that the *distance* of the flight, and not the *celerity*, is spoken of. ‘If I direct my wings towards the morning, or the east, and if I dwell in the extremity of the western sea.’

9. *If I take the wings of the morning.*]—‘If I could fly with

the rapidity of the morning rays.' The rays of the rising sun are beautifully and poetically called 'the wings of the morning.'

13. *Thou hast possessed my reins.*]—The Syriac and Arabic versions read, 'Thou hast fashioned, or formed my reins.' The reins, or loins, beside being metaphorically used for the passions and desires, were considered as the seat of animal strength and vigor.

15. *Curiously wrought.*]—Bp. Lowth, in speaking of this psalm, says, 'In that most perfect ode, which celebrates the immensity of the Omnipresent Deity, and the wisdom of the divine artificer in forming the human body, the author uses a metaphor derived from the most subtil art of the Phrygian workman:

'When I was formed in the secret place,
When I was wrought, with a needle, in the depths of
the earth.'

'Whoever observes this, (in truth he will not be able to observe it in the common translations) and at the same time reflects on the wonderful organization of the human body, the various implications of the veins, arteries, fibres, and membranes; the 'undescribable texture' of the whole fabric; may, indeed, feel the beauty and gracefulness of this well-adapted metaphor; but much of its force and sublimity will be lost, unless the reader be apprised, that the art of designing in needle-work was wholly dedicated to the use of the sanctuary, and, by a direct precept of the divine law, chiefly employed in furnishing a part of the sacerdotal habit, (Exod. xxviii. 39; xxvi. 36; xxvii. 16; compare Ezek. xvi. 10, 13, 18,) and the veils for the entrance of the tabernacle. Thus, the poet compares the wisdom of the divine artificer with the most estimable of human arts; that art which was dignified by being consecrated altogether to the use of religion; and the workmanship of which was so exquisite, that even the sacred writings seem to attribute it to a supernatural guidance.' See Exod. xxxv. 30—35.

The objection to this criticism is, that it seems too minute. It shews the learning and ingenuity of its author; but, under it, the genuine spirit of true poetry evaporates.

'In the lowest parts of the earth,' means no more, says Mr. Mudge, than 'low down in the earth,' as opposed to that height of heaven, where God sits, and inspects, and orders every thing. But Dr. Taylor, in his *Treatise on Original Sin*, p. 37, understands by it his mother's earthly body, or womb, as in Ephes. iv. 9.

16. *Thine eyes did see my substance, &c.*—Some think that the allusion to embroidery is here carried on. As the embroiderer hath still his book or pattern before him, to which he always recurs; so, by a method as exact, ‘were all my members in continuance fashioned;’ i. e. from the rude embryo, or mass, they daily received some degree of figuration, as from the skeins of silk under the artificer’s hands, there at length arises an unexpected beauty, and an accurate harmony of colors and proportions.—*Dr. Dodd.*

17. Green renders this verse, ‘How precious unto me, O God, are the thoughts of Thee! How numerous are the subjects of them!’

PSALM CXL. VER. 3. *They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent.*—It was an ancient opinion, that the tongue of the serpent was his sting; which, before he inflicted a wound, he was supposed to whet, or sharpen. This idea originated, perhaps, from its quick vibratory motion, when the animal is terrified, or enraged.—See *Poli Synopsis.*

More accurate investigations of the works of nature have proved this, and other opinions, to be erroneous; but the popular notion sufficiently illustrates the text of the Psalmist, whose office was not to teach natural history, and to anticipate the discoveries of future ages, by revelations from God; but to enforce moral and religious duties. He was to address himself to the imagination, as well as to the understanding, and to embellish the sublime subjects of which he treats, with all the graces of figurative language, and all the charms of oriental poetry.

Nothing can be a greater mistake than to suppose, that the sacred writers were required to remove all the misapprehensions of ignorance and inexperience, on subjects of mere science; or that they were called on to forestal the noblest employment of the human mind, and to preclude the gradual advancement of knowledge, by divine inspiration. Their duty in revealing the will of God, and in disclosing his righteous judgments, so far as the plan of infinite wisdom, from time to time, required, was to speak and write a language, that was generally known; to use such illustrations as were familiar, and to teach those duties, which it is incumbent on all men to practise. See Bp. Lowth’s remark, respecting the eagle, Isa. xl. 31.

There is no variation in the ancient versions on this text.

5. *Gins.*—Rather, ‘snares, traps.’ But the Targum, and all the ancient versions, except the Syriac, interpret the Hebrew word **מקשי** ‘stumbling-blocks,’ i. e. any thing which might occasion another to fall. After ‘cords’ in this verse, the Septuagint adds, ‘for my feet.’

8. *Lest they exalt themselves.*]—Abp. Secker, Bp. Hare, Houbigant, and Dr. Kennicott, would omit *Selah*, and connect the latter clause of this verse with the following, thus: ‘Let not those that compass me about exalt their head; let the mischief of their own lips cover them.’

10. *Let burning coals, &c.*]—These dreadful images seem to be derived from the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Many serious believers, as well as sceptics, have been alarmed, or offended, at the dreadful imprecations, and the vindictive spirit, which appear in this verse, and in other parts of the Psalms. In some cases, the expressions have been thought to be declamatory, or prophetic; and, instead of the optative, or imperative mood, the future tense has been substituted: but this mode of interpretation, however satisfactory it may be in explaining some portion of the sixth psalm, will not apply universally; nor is it necessary to have recourse to it. Commentators should consider, that one important advantage of the Holy Scriptures is, that they afford a faithful picture of the state of human nature, under a great variety of circumstances, and through a long series of ages. Whether we regard the historical narratives of the Bible, or the inspired productions of its poetical books, the heart of man, whatever be his rank, or station, is portrayed with the utmost fidelity and truth. We see, therefore, individuals speaking and acting, in conformity with their principles and passions, and we view SOCIETY as it really was: but we must not judge of either by the laws of the gospel. That gentle and forbearing spirit, which leads to the forgiveness of injuries, and which, instead of imprecating the vengeance of God, can offer a prayer for enemies and persecutors; that true charity, which can pity the weakness, and feel for the distresses of a fellow-creature, as a brother descended from the same Father; and that wisdom from above, which reduces all the evils of this life to comparative insignificance, by the resurrection of the dead, and by pointing out a state of just retribution, in a state of immortality;—these and other glorious truths were reserved for that more perfect dispensation, in the history of God’s providence, of which the Mosaic institution formed only the ‘beggarly elements,’ and of which the ordinances of Judaism were mere types and shadows.

PSALM CXLI. Mr. Peters has given a new explanation of this psalm, which, with his literal translation from the Hebrew, is here subjoined.

It seems probable, that David composed this psalm just before his flight to Achish, king of Gath; when he had a second

time spared Saul's life, but could trust him no longer. As his resolution was to fly speedily; as it was in the evening of that day, when he was now upon the wing, and Saul's implacable cruelty towards him was still fresh upon his thoughts; reflecting moreover on the dangers and temptations to which his religion would expose him in a heathen country; he pours out his soul to God in the following prayer, or soliloquy: and, that it was composed in the evening, appears from his desiring, ver. 2, that it might be accepted as an evening oblation.

1. 'Jehovah, I call upon thee, haste thee unto me, give ear to my voice, when I cry unto thee. 2. Let my prayer be set forth (as) incense, before thee; the lifting up my hands (as) an evening oblation. 3. Set, O Lord, a watch to my mouth, a guard over the door of my lips. 4. Incline not mine heart to an evil thing, to attempt enterprizes in wickedness with men that work iniquity, (or idolatry), neither let me eat of their dainties. 5. Let the just man be still upbraiding me with my goodness, and let the ointment of my head be urged against me; it shall not break my head: for hitherto—yea, my prayer yet shall be against their wickedness. 6. Their judges have been dismissed in the rocky places, and have heard my words that they were sweet. 7. Like as when one cutteth and cleaveth; (so) have our bones been scattered on the command of Saul.'

The Hebrew letters for 'Sheol' and 'Saul' are the same; and therefore we may read 'at the command of Saul,' without the least alteration of the text. The 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th verses may be thus briefly paraphrased. 3. I am going to seek a retreat among a race of idolaters; set a guard, O Lord, on my lips, that I may neither, by my imprudent behaviour, endanger my own safety, nor violate my religion by any weak compliances. 4. Preserve me from that greatest of all evils, the renouncing of Thee, to follow vain and strange gods; neither let me be allured by their luxurious festivals. 5. Though my friends, those advocates for strict justice, upbraided me with my excessive piety and goodness, and though the anointing of my head, or thy designation of me to the throne, be urged against me, why I might justly take the life of Saul, yet I trust in thy mercy, 'it shall not break my head,' nor bring me to destruction; for hitherto thou hast preserved me, &c. 6. Nevertheless, their princes, those severe judges, have been dismissed by me in safety, when I had them absolutely in my power in the rocky deserts: only I have expostulated with them in the mildest and gentlest manner. 7. But how unlike, how barbarous has their treatment been of me! My best friends have been slaughtered in great numbers, at the command of Saul,

and hewed in pieces, in his presence, as one would cut, or chop a piece of wood.—See *Peters* on Job, p. 340, &c.

2. *Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense.*—That is, ‘Let it ascend to thee, and be as acceptable as the incense, which thou hast commanded to be offered upon thine altar,’ *Exod.* xxx. 1—10.

2. *The evening sacrifice.*—The evening sacrifice was more solemn than that of the morning; the prayers also were longer, and it was more numerously attended. It commenced at the ninth hour, which is therefore called, *Acts* iii. 1, ‘The hour of prayer.’

5. *It shall be an excellent oil, &c.*—Street reads, agreeably to the Septuagint and other ancient versions, ‘And let not the oil of the impious anoint my head; but let my prayer be ever against their wickedness, saying, may their judges be overthrown on the edge of a rock, that they may hearken to the words of Jehovah, for they are sweet!’ By, ‘Let not the oil of the impious anoint my head,’ the Psalmist means, let me not be prevailed on to enter, as a guest, the habitations of the wicked, or to receive any hospitable attentions from them.

7. *Our bones are scattered at the grave’s mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.*—This seems to be strong, eastern painting, and almost figurative language; but that it may be strictly true, the following extract demonstrates: ‘At five o’clock, we left Garigana, our journey being still to the eastward of north; and, at a quarter past six in the evening, we arrived at the village of that name, whose inhabitants had all perished with hunger the year before; their wretched bones being unburied, and scattered upon the surface of the ground, where the village formerly stood. We encamped among the bones of the dead, as no space could be found free from them; and on the 23d, at six in the morning, full of horror at this miserable spectacle, we set out for Teawa; this was the seventh day from Ras el Feel. After an hour’s travelling, we came to a small river, which still had water standing in some considerable pools, although its banks were destitute of any kind of shade.’—*Bruce’s Travels*, vol. iv. p. 349.

The Syriac and Arabic versions read, ‘their bones.’ A very slight change in the Hebrew text would cause this variation.

9. *The gins.*—See note on *Ps.* cxi. 5.

PSALM CXLII. As this Psalm is said in the title to be a prayer, it would have been better to have rendered the verbs throughout in the present tense. ‘I cry unto the Lord,’ &c.

PSALM CXLIII. This is the seventh and last of the penitential psalms. It seems particularly suited to the state of the Christian church. In it the penitent, ver. 1, makes his prayer

to God for pardon; ver. 2, acknowledges the impossibility of any man being saved but by grace; ver. 3, 4, deplores the lamentable effects of sin; ver. 5, comforts himself with a retrospect of God's mercies of old; and ver. 6—12, prays in a variety of expressions for remission of sin, sanctification, and redemption.—*Bp. Horne.*

3. *For the enemy.*]—The particle *כִּי*, which is here rendered 'for,' seems redundant; or, if translated, the English should have been, 'truly,' 'verily,' or 'indeed.'—See *Noldius*, or *Taylor's Heb. Concord.*

6. *As a thirsty land.*]—That is, as a dry, parched country seems to thirst for rain.

PSALM CXLIV. VER. 12. *As corner-stones.*]—Rather, 'As the carved corners.' In the description of the sanctuary, or holy of holies, built by Solomon in the temple, (1 Kings vi.) we are told, (ver. 29, 30) that 'He carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubims and palm-trees, and open flowers, within and without; and the floor of the house he overlaid with gold within and without.' The corners therefore of the building of the sanctuary were highly ornamented with carving; and the wishing any one to be as beautiful as they were, was the utmost stretch of the fancy of an Hebrew poet.—*Street.*

13. *In our streets.*]—The Hebrew *בְּחוֹצוֹתֵינוּ* is here very improperly rendered 'in our streets,' which are by no means fit, or usual places, for sheep to bring forth their young. The word for 'streets' in the next verse, is very different. We should render, therefore, with *Michaëlis* and others, 'In our open pastures.' It is remarkable, that our translators have englished the same Hebrew word, Job v. 10, by 'fields.'

PSALM CXLV. This psalm is composed with great art, each verse, in the original, beginning with a new letter of the alphabet; but the *nun* is wanting, possibly because the copy from whence the collector took it was imperfect in that place, and he would not presume to supply the defect. But however that may be, this composition was always esteemed so excellent, that the title of the whole book of Psalms, which is *סֵפֶר תְּהִלִּים* 'The Book of Praises,' was taken from it. It is wholly spent in praising God, and with such admirable devotion, that the ancient Hebrews used to say, 'He could not fail of being an inhabitant of the heavenly Canaan, who repeated this psalm three times a day.'—*Bp. Patrick.*

5. *I will speak of.*]—I read at the end of the first clause, *יִדְבְּרוּ*, 'they shall speak,' and of the second *יִשְׁיִחוּ*, 'and they shall tell,' on the authority of the versions.—*Dr. Kennicott's*

note on this place, in his Remarks on Select Passages in the Old Testament.

12. *To make known.*]—Rather, ‘making known,’ &c. The ancient versions, instead of ‘his mighty acts,’ and ‘his kingdom,’ read ‘thy.’ But the sudden change of person is by no means uncommon in the Hebrew poetry, and this psalm appears to be of the responsive kind.

13. *Throughout all generations.*]—Between the 13th and 14th verse, a verse is wanting. It is supplied by the Septuagint, Vulgate, Syriac, Arabic, and Æthiopic versions, which shews that these were made from copies of the Hebrew that were not defective. The translation of the verse wanting is this; ‘The Lord is faithful in all his words, and righteous in all his works.’—*Pilkington.*

PSALM CXLVI. This psalm, and the four following, begin and end with the word Hallelujah, ‘Praise the Lord.’ All of them contain exhortations to the people to exert themselves in that heavenly employment, which this psalm recommends to them, from the consideration of several of the divine excellences, which render Him the proper object of our confidence in all conditions. It is probably the production of some pious person, after his return from the Babylonish captivity, when it was soon apparent, that it was in vain to rely on the favor of princes; some of whom opposed the building of the temple, with the same zeal that Cyrus had promoted it.—*Bp. Patrick.*

4. *In that very day his thoughts perish.*]—Rather, as the Septuagint reads, ‘All his reasonings and calculations,’ with respect to the things of this world.

9. *But the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.*]—‘Way’ is here used for ‘actions;’ or the general rule and course of conduct. This, the Psalmist means to say, ‘God frequently defeats, or subverts.’

10. *Praise ye the Lord.*]—This Hallelujah is omitted here in the Septuagint, and forms the title of the next psalm.

PSALM CXLVII. This psalm seems to have been written by Nehemiah, when he had finished the walls, and erected the gates of Jerusalem.

10. *In the strength of the horse.*]—It seems to have been a notion among the idolatrous Jews, that the false deities, which they worshipped, were pleased with having horses and chariots dedicated to them. Some traces of this superstition are to be found, 2 Kings xxiii. 11. Perhaps they might also have instituted races of men on foot to the honor of some of their idols, as the Greeks and Romans did; and the Psalmist may be pointing out here the contrast between the things, that were

supposed to be grateful to these false gods, and those which pleased Jehovah.—*Street*.

16. *He scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes.*]—When wood is burning in the open air, some of the ashes, being light, are usually carried up along with the flame and smoke; and, after floating awhile in the air, they fall down again softly and gently; the particles of hoar-frost descend in much the same silent and almost imperceptible manner.—*Fawkes*.

17. *Ice like morsels.*]—The Syriac version reads, ‘like crumbs;’ and the Arabic ‘like wheaten flour.’ The Psalmist is describing small rain, or rain that freezes as it falls; that is, what we call ‘sleet.’

PSALM CXLVIII. All the creatures in the invisible and visible world are called upon by the Psalmist to unite in a grand chorus of praise and thanksgiving. The various parts are to be performed by, ver. 1, 2, The angelic hosts; ver. 3—6, The material heavens, and the luminaries placed in them; ver. 7, The ocean, with its inhabitants; ver. 8, The meteors of the air; ver. 9, 10, The earth as divided into hills and valleys, with the vegetables that grow out of it, and the animals that move upon, or about it; ver. 11—13, The human race of every degree, of either sex, and of every age; ver. 14, more especially, The Israel, or Church of God.—*Bp. Horne*.

1. *From the heavens.*]—Rather, ‘Amidst the heavens;’ for so the proposition מִן means, 1 Chron. xi. 25. Joel i. 12.—See *Noldius*, or *Taylor*.

5. *Let them praise.*]—From the change of the person of the verb, in the fifth and thirteenth verses, it seems, that this psalm is of the responsive kind.—*Street*.

6. *He hath made a decree which shall not pass.*]—Rather, ‘which shall not pass away.’ That is, the great laws of nature, by which the celestial bodies continue, and are preserved in their orbits, shall last for ever; or till God, who first created the world, may think proper to destroy it.

7. *Ye dragons.*]—The Hebrew word תַּנִּינִים, which we render ‘dragons,’ seems to comprise whales, crocodiles, sea-monsters, and the larger kinds of fishes. Perhaps, it was a term meant to comprehend every living creature that was noxious, loathsome, and terrific. See *Taylor’s Hebrew Concord.* on the word תַּנִּן.

14. *He also exalteth the horn of his people, &c.*]—Mudge’s version is, ‘When he exalteth the horn of his people, it is a subject of praise for all his favored ones.’ Bp. Lowth prefers, ‘And he exalteth the horn of his people: he is a subject of praise to all his saints, even to the children of Israel, a people that is near unto him.’—See *Merrick*.

PSALM CXLIX. In the notes on the sixtieth psalm, I have supposed that to have been an ode sung by the armies of Israel, says Street, as they advanced to fight against the Syrians at Helam. This seems to be another of those compositions; for the sixth, seventh, and eighth verses shew, that it is a song of battle.

That the Jews were wont to sing the praises of God, as they advanced to combat, may be seen in the books of the Maccabees, 2 Mac. xiii. 15. 'Having given the watch-word to them that were about him, Victory is of God; with the most valiant and choice young men, he went in into the king's tent by night.' And again, 2 Mac. xv. 25, 26, 'Then Nicanor, and they that were with him, came forward with trumpets and songs. But Judas and his company encountered the enemies with invocation and prayer.'

1. *The congregation of saints.*]—The word 'saints' is sufficiently explained by the last verse of the preceding psalm; namely, 'the children of Israel,' the people that served God; in contradistinction to the idolatrous nations, who served him not; and so it follows here, 'Let Israel rejoice,' &c.

3. *Let them praise his name in the dance.*]—This act of devotion, how ludicrous soever it may appear to us, has always been looked upon with reverence by the eastern nations. Thus, Ps. cl. 4, 'Praise him with the timbrel and dance.' Agreeably to these injunctions, we read, that 'The women went out after Miriam with timbrels and with dances,' Exod. xv. 20, and that 'David danced before the Lord,' 2 Sam. vi. 14.

4. *He will beautify the meek with salvation.*]—'He maketh the humble glorious with salvation.'—Street.

'He decorateth the humble with victory.'—Mudge.

5. *Let them sing aloud upon their beds.*]—'The beds referred to, on which they were to sing aloud, were probably the couches, on which they reclined at their banquets, and ordinary meals.' This gives a sense to a passage, says Dr. Doddridge, on any other interpretation, scarcely intelligible.

PSALM CL. VER. 1. *Praise God in his sanctuary.*]—Or, 'In his holiness;' i. e. 'For the inexpressible purity and holiness of his nature.' 'In the firmament of his power,' means, 'for the vast extent of his power, which is expanded and diffused over all his works.' See note on Gen. i. 6. Mudge renders it, 'Praise him in the expanse of his strength.'

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

...I have
...of Israel,
...the Syrians at
...; for
...it is a song of

...of God, as they
...of the Macedo-
...word to them
...the most valiant
...the king's tent by
...Nicanor, and they
...trumpets and songs.
...the enemies with in-
...and power.

The reference to the 'saints' is suffi-
...by the fact of the preceding psalm,
...of Israel, the people that served God;
...in the nations, who served him
...and so it follows that 'Let Israel rejoice,' &c.

3. *Let them praise his name in the dance.*—This act of de-
...it may appear to us, has always
...by the eastern nations. Thus,
...Ps. xl. 4, 'Praise him with the timbrel and dance.' Agreeably
...we read, that 'The women went out after
...with timbrels and with dances,' Exod. xv. 20, and that
...before the Lord,' 2 Sam. vi. 14.

4. *He will bestow the word with salvation.*—'He maketh
...salvation.'—Street.

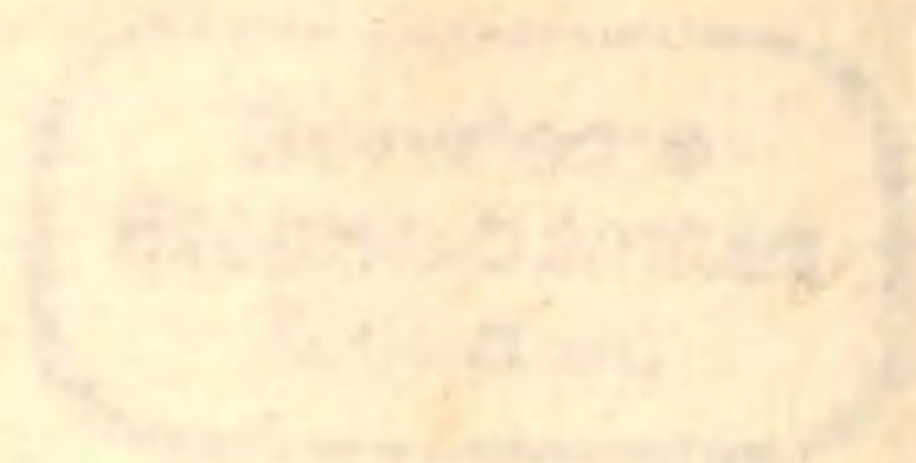
'He decketh the humble with victory.'—Mudge.

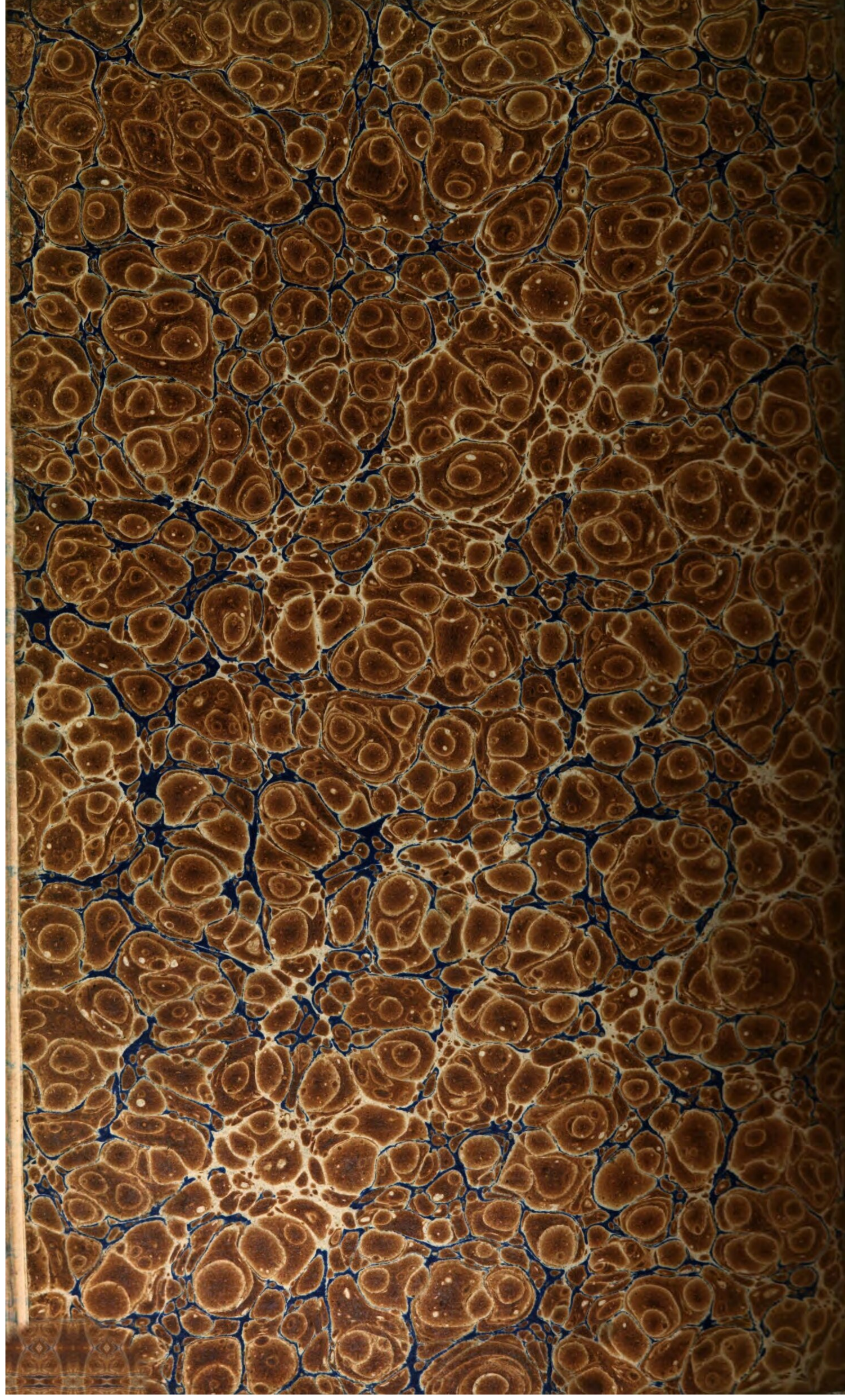
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Hewlett, John,

Commentaries and annotations on the Holy Scriptures

Bd.: 2

London 1816

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